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A SECRET OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC.

The long journey undertaken by a son to right a wrong done to his father—How he fell from favor with some of the ship's company and what a wreck brought about—
The coral island and the mystery shrouded by its cliffs.

(Complete in This Issue.)

CHAPTER I.—STARTLING NEWS.

IT was four o'clock of a warm September afternoon. A heavily built, striking looking fellow of three and twenty came rapidly along the narrow streets toward the water front, and halted at the door of the shipping firm above which was the sign of Undercliff & Monckton. His height and breadth of shoulders were noticeable even among the brawny truckmen and roustabouts who loitered on the curb, and his carriage and alert movements betrayed the all round athlete.

As he entered the outer office a group of clerks was gathered about an individual who leaned negligently against one of the desks. This central figure was a fellow of about the newcomer's age, of slight build, a dark complexion, and dressed in the height of fashion.

"Hullo! here's another Harvardite!" exclaimed one of the clerks. "How are you, Mr. Thorne?"

The newcomer returned the greeting cordially, but did not appear to notice the man of the dark complexion.

"Howdy, deah boy," drawled the latter, languidly extending his gloved hand.

But Thorne bowed coolly, failing to see the hand, and passed on to a rear door marked "Chas. Undercliff. Private."

"He's a regular bore, don't ye know," he heard the languid individual say, as he opened the door.

There was but one occupant of the room, a man of fifty years perhaps, with iron gray mustache, and an upright carriage. He was pacing the floor when Thorne entered, but turned to him with outstretched hand and a welcome smile as he heard the latch click.

"Ah, Howard! I'm delighted to see you," he said, returning the younger man's warm pressure. "I've been looking for you for an hour."

"I was on the river when your note reached me, and had to go to my
(A)

rooms to change my boating flannels for something which I could appear down town in," and Thorne, with a laugh, dropped into a convenient chair before the baize covered table. "But what's in the wind, Guardy?"

The expression of the elder mau's face changed instantly. His eyes shifted their gaze from the frank countenance of his questioner and a deep line appeared between his brows. He set to pacing the floor again with nervous strides.

"Oh—ah—well, Howard, I hardly know how to tell you. I received some news today that has quite upset me."

"On which you want the benefit of my experience," laughed the other. A little smile played under Mr. Undercliff's mustache for an instant.

"Not exactly, my boy. But it is something you must know."

"Drive ahead then, sir."

"I—I wish I *could* drive ahead," returned the older man, hesitatingly.

"But, to tell you the truth, I scarcely know how to begin."

The other's face betrayed his surprise and curiosity.

"You wonder what has shaken me so," pursued Mr. Undercliff. "Ah, Howard, old memories have been stirred today that have slept for years. Little wonder that I am shaken."

"Has it to do with *me*?"

"Yes."

"About me?"

"No, my boy. It is about your father."

The young man started.

"My father?" he repeated. "I *should* like to hear about him, it is true. I believe you have never told me very much concerning him. He died twenty years ago—before I could remember him—did he not?"

Undercliff halted in his walk and faced the younger man. He placed both hands upon the table and leaned forward, with his shrewd eyes fixed upon Thorne's face.

"It is a fact, Howard; I have never told you much about your parents. Otherwise I think I have done my duty by you," he said, with some emotion.

"My dear friend," cried the other, "you could not have treated me more kindly or liberally had I been your own son."

"Thank you, my boy. I have looked upon you as my son. But perhaps I should have told you something more about your own father ere this. But I had always believed him dead——"

"Believed him dead?" interrupted Thorne, springing to his feet. "Then—then——"

"Today I have had news which leads me to believe the opposite," said Charles Undercliff, quietly.

"For heaven's sake, sir, explain!" gasped the young man. "Do you mean that my father is alive?"

"Something that has occurred on the opposite side of the globe, news of which only reached us today, leads me to believe that he *is*. But sit down, Howard. Calm yourself. Let me tell you the whole story—and a sad,

bitterly sad one it is. If you can, forgive me the mistake which I made in the past."

His voice broke a little and he turned his eyes away from the younger man's face. "My dear guardian" exclaimed Thorne, "I can forgive *you* anything."

"Thank you, my boy. Now listen to me. You father, Edgar Thorne, and I were friends all through our boyhood, and room mates at college. When my father died and left me his shipping business I at once took your father into the office as confidential clerk. Monckton had filled the same position with my father, and it was at the old man's request that I gave him a partnership in the business. Your father married soon after coming with us, and your mother—who was one of the finest women I ever saw—died a few weeks after you were born. I have always let you suppose that your father died soon after your mother.

"But he did not. He was completely broken down by your mother's death. He had seemed almost to live for her, and cared for nothing when she was gone, not even for you, my poor boy. But you mustn't feel harsh toward him for that. He would have loved you as you grew older.

"Edgar was an entirely different man from me," continued Mr. Undercliff, retrospectively. "When he was younger he had been a little wild at times—especially during our college days. But I think that my influence—I was always a regular sober sides you know—I think my influence did much to keep him straight. Then, when he was married, he was so much in love with your dear mother that he hadn't a thought for anything else outside of business.

"I think he began to drink a little at first to drown the thoughts of his loss. Then he got to gambling. He craved excitement—anything to deaden the remembrance of his happiness.

"Finally his mode of life came to my ears. I remonstrated with him—at first as a friend. Afterward, as I saw it did no good, I spoke to him as an employer. God forgive me if I spoke harshly. I meant it for the best. He promised to brace up. Only a few days after that he changed the combination of the firm's safe. We did that quarterly. I was away that day and he did not tell Monckton the new combination. He wrote it upon a slip of paper and placed it in his own desk. He was the only person who knew it.

"When the safe was opened the next day a package containing five thousand dollars, which had been drawn from the bank the day before for a special purpose, was missing. We searched everywhere. The clerks swore they saw the money placed in the vault. Your father himself said he saw it there when he locked up. But it was gone.

"I would not believe at first that Edgar had taken it. But I learned he had got very deeply into debt through his gambling, and the very night before had paid several 'debts of honor.' Monckton accused him of the robbery, and I could not but believe the evidence.

"But I would not allow my partner to call in the police. I talked with Edgar, plead with him to confess and make a new start. He indignantly refused to confess anything of the kind. He denied all knowledge of the

lost money, blamed me for suspecting him, and refused to listen to me further. He left me in a rage, and from that day to this I have never seen him."

Mr. Undercliff was silent a moment, while he sought to control his voice.

"Howard, I couldn't believe him guilty. Monckton's declaration overpowered my mind for the moment; but when poor Edgar was gone I could not rest. I set detectives to work. One man followed your father in his flight. He had crossed the continent by slow stages and finally sailed in the ship Juan Fernandez for Australia. The Juan Fernandez did not reach her port, nor was she ever heard from. We supposed him dead.

"Meanwhile the other detectives worked upon the mystery here in Boston. For two years I kept them in my pay. Then, one day, while the offices were being repaired and the vault enlarged, a workman found a package wedged in between the metal sheetings. It was a package of bank notes, the very package your father had been accused of stealing!"

Howard said nothing, but turned away his head, for his eyes were wet.

"Oh, my boy, you cannot know the pain I felt. I had suspected my dearest friend unjustly. He had gone to his grave misjudged. I determined to do all in my power for his son, as I could not bring Edgar back. I had already taken you under my care. You had been in the charge of an old aunt of your father's since your mother's death. She was the only living relative you had, and she passed away soon after you came to me. I have tried to do by you as I know Edgar would have wished."

"And you have done much for me, Guardy," interrupted young Thorne, brokenly.

"Can you forgive me for so harshly judging your father?"

"Indeed, there is nothing to forgive," cried Howard. He leaned forward and seized the other's hand. "God bless you, sir! You've been more than a father to me."

"But this is not all I have to tell you," said the older man. "I have had wonderful news today."

"What was it, sir?"

"News which leads me to believe your father is, or was quite recently, alive. Captain Latimer, of the brig Naida, got in today. He made his report to me and then gave me a draft on an English banker at Auckland, New Zealand, for a thousand and thirty odd pounds, and this note."

As he spoke Mr. Undercliff drew from his wallet a folded paper and passed it to Thorne. The latter opened it and read:

AUKLAND, N. Z., November 20, '94.

The inclosed draft is to reimburse Messrs. Undercliff & Monckton, Boston, U. S. A., for certain moneys which were missing from their safe on the morning of July 13, 1875. This money is not devoted to this purpose because the man accused was guilty, for he still declares his innocence; but it is sent that the firm might not lose the sum through his carelessness or negligence. This is his last duty to a harsh world that will hear of him no more.

"What does it mean?" cried Thorne.

"Can't you read?"

"But who wrote it?"

"That was written by your father, Edgar Thorne," declared Mr. Undercliff. "Although written in the third person, the handwriting is not disguised. It is your father's—I would stake my life upon it!"

"Then he is alive!" murmured Howard.

"He *was* alive two years ago. He may be alive now."

"But where?"

"That is the mystery. But what the banker told Captain Latimer points to an explanation.

"According to the banker's story, and what Latimer could learn from other people who met Edgar in Auckland, he had come from some island in the Marquesas or the American Archipelagoes—or near those islands, at least—and had returned to the unknown islet after completing his business in Auckland."

"An island in the Pacific?"

"In the South Pacific. Many of them are occupied, Captain Latimer tells me, by small parties of whites, or natives. The vessel your father sailed in from America may have been wrecked there and he only saved. And he has lived there since, believing that the smirch of an uncommitted crime still rests upon his name."

"By heaven! it is terrible!" cried Thorne, leaping up and pacing the floor. "What can I do?"

"What can *we* do, rather," said Mr. Undercliff quickly. "There is only one thing we *can* do."

"What is it, sir?"

"Search for that island."

"But, sir, it will cost——"

"If it costs the last cent I possess, I'll not begrudge it."

"God bless you, sir! And I'll go to the South Pacific and find him."

"You shall, my boy. I'll send you out on the *Naida*. She goes back to Auckland in a month or six weeks."

At that moment there was a rap upon the door of the private office.

"Wait!" exclaimed Undercliff. "It is Captain Latimer. You shall hear the story from his own lips."

CHAPTER II.—A TELLTALE DISCOVERY IN DATES.

THE senior member of the shipping firm hastened to open the door. There were three men without.

"Here is Latimer again, Undercliff," said the sharp voice of the foremost of the newcomers. He was a tall, spare man, with dark hatchet features and a shifting gray eye. It was Mr. Monckton, and following him closely came the very much dressed young fellow whom Thorne had so coolly greeted in the outer office. This was Carter Monckton, son of the junior partner. Behind them was a grizzled, mahogany faced man of fifty odd, who looked every inch the sea captain.

"Good afternoon, young man," said Monckton senior, bowing coldly to Thorne.

"Come in, come in, gentlemen," said Undercliff, with some nervousness. "Take seats, do. How d'ye do, Carter?"

"Thanks, I'm well," responded the younger man. "But by Jove isn't this a start? I sh'd think you'd feel knocked all of a heap, Thorne, at such news."

Thorne's brow grew dark and he made no reply. Mr. Undercliff hastened to get down to business.

"Monckton," he said, turning to his partner, "I have just been telling Howard the sad story connected with his father's disappearance."

The elder Monckton's thin lips contracted unpleasantly.

"You should have told him before, Undercliff," he said sourly; "I have often said so. There was no use in covering up the—the unfortunate affair."

"You were glad enough that I refused to have it made public, when the money was found at last," said Mr. Undercliff. "You know that, Monckton."

The other grunted, but made no audible reply.

"But we haven't time to discuss *that*," pursued the senior partner. "Captain Latimer, this is Howard Thorne; Edgar's son, you know."

"And he looks a sight like him," responded the captain, giving Thorne one of his stumpy hands. "I'm pleased to meet you, sir, an' I'm willin' to wager you're thinkin' of takin' a trip to the South Pacific about as quick as you can get ready, eh, sir?"

"I am," replied Thorne, gravely.

"Just so," said the mariner. "I says to myself, 'that boy'll be about starting off immediate to find his father, if so be he's above board yet'."

"Reg'lar romance, isn't it?" murmured Carter, from the opposite side of the table.

His father fixed him with his cold eye, and he subsided for the moment. Thorne controlled a longing to shake him out of his boots, and turned again to Captain Latimer.

"Mr. Undercliff has only given me the barest outline of the affair," he said. "Won't you tell me all about this—this man who is supposed to be Edgar Thorne?"

"I will, sir, though it won't take me long to tell all I know, I'm sorry to say. If I'd been a prophet, or one o' these here clairvoyants, I might have been able to tell you a deal more. I had a chance to learn it."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Undercliff.

"Why, sir, I didn't tell you *all* the particulars as to how I come by what information I got. You know we was pressed for time this morning."

"True, Latimer, but Howard here is desperately interested. I know he'll be glad to hear every scrap of information bearing on the appearance of Edgar Thorne in Auckland."

"Very well sir. I'll spin my yarn."

He settled back in his seat and, leaning his elbows on the chair arms, twirled his stumpy brown thumbs as he talked.

"The very day we got into Auckland a fellow came aboard the brig claiming to be an American seaman in distress. He wanted to be took home, an'

was anxious to go with me. He reeled off a yarn that sounded so fishy that I didn't give him much encouragement, so he sheered off and went aboard a British ship that lay in the roadstead. She sailed that very flood, an' I reckon he went with her. The yarn he gave me was like this :

"He claimed to be the sole survivor of the coal laden bark, Anna Pixley, bound from Sydney to San Francisco. She'd met a heavy blow somewhere off the America group an' lost her spars, an' to cap it all, her cargo took fire. The captain and mate was blowed up by an explosion of gas, and in trying to put off from the burning bark in a gale, the other officers and most of the men lost their lives. The boats was all stove an' he and his mates built a raft an' put off durin' a lull in the storm. But the raft went to pieces before morning and his comrades went down.

"He clung to the wreck of the raft for twenty four hours and then the weather cleared an' he floated ashore on an island. And, accordin' to his tell, it was a good sized lump of ground. But it was uninhabited. He said there was the wreck of some craft in a sheltered cove, but not a sign of a man on the island—or on that part of it he could get to. A good portion of it was unscalable cliffs. Volcanic I s'pose. Lot of them Pacific islands are—what ain't coral.

"Well, I remember he said he was there some weeks, when one morning he found a boat drawn up on the sand before the hut he'd made for himself, and a man waiting for him to come out. This stranger wouldn't answer any questions about himself, or how he got there in that open boat ; but he told him he was going to New Zealand and he could go along, if he liked, and help work the boat.

"The man's craft was a ship's long boat, furnished with a sail and well provisioned. They made a good passage to Auckland, where the man went to two or three bankers and sold some pearls he had with him, gave the sailor a five pound note, and left in the boat they had come in. The sailor hung around Auckland while his money held out, and when I saw him, being on a lee shore, he wanted to ship again.

"As I say, I didn't take much stock in his yarn at the time. Two men sailing something like fifteen hundred miles in a ship's long boat sounded pretty fishy. But afterward, when the banker gave me that draft and told me about the man that left it, I wished I'd paid more attention to what the fellow said. The sailor told me the latitude and longitude of the Anna Pixley the day before she foundered, but when I looked at the chart I couldn't find an island anywhere around the locality. That's one reason why I didn't believe him."

"And you think this man who brought the sailor to Auckland was my father?" asked Thorne.

"Sure."

"If we only had that sailor he might be able to take you to the very island," suggested Mr. Undercliff.

"You say he gave you his vessel's position a day or so before he saw the island?" queried Howard. "Wouldn't that help us?"

"A little—if I can remember it. But bless you, I don't believe I could.

You see, I paid so little attention to his yarn. Still, I know *about* where it was ; within a couple of hundred miles, or so."

"A couple of hundred miles!" exclaimed Mr. Monckton.

"That's not so bad at sea, sir," said the captain. "If Mr. Thorne gets a tidy little craft at Auckland—and I've little doubt he can—he'll soon search a bit of water like that."

"It's my opinion you've got a contract for all winter, Thorne," said Carter drily.

"Well," said Thorne, with a sigh, "it *does* look a big undertaking ; but I'll find the island if it's above water."

"Little doubt, you think, of his getting the sort of a vessel he wants at Auckland?" inquired the merchant.

"There, or at Sydney, sir. If he was putting in to Valparaiso I'd say *that* would be the port to pick up what he wants. But if we went there the Naida would be a long way off her course."

"That would never do," interjected Monckton senior, sharply. "Your last voyage was quite long enough, Captain Latimer."

"True, true," responded Undercliff mildly.

By this time Thorne was walking the office with nervous strides, and scarcely noticed what the others were saying.

"It will cost a fortune," he groaned. "Do you realize it, Guardy?"

"Don't you worry about that," returned Charles Undercliff, quickly.

"My last cent shall be spent, if necessary, in finding Edgar and bringing him back."

"Pooh ! pooh !" exclaimed Monckton senior. "Let us not have heroics, Undercliff. Young Thorne shows a deal of good sense. It *will* cost you a large sum for this venture which, I believe, will simply be wasted."

"Wasted !" cried Thorne.

"Yes, sir. Despite the fact that Captain Latimer looks upon the searching of a portion of the ocean about as large as the Bengal Gulf as a small matter, I do not consider it such. It will cost a vast amount of money and a vast amount of time ; and the end will, I fear, be disappointing."

"Come, come !" cried Undercliff, "don't throw cold water, Monckton. As for the money, Howard, don't let that worry you. It shall be forthcoming. See here."

He rose hastily and opened a safe which stood behind him—his own private one. Pulling out a drawer he brought forth a flat package and flung it down upon the table in front of Thorne.

"That will do to start you off," he said. "It is the very money that was so strangely lost and found. I never felt as if I could use those notes."

The senior Monckton uttered a slight exclamation and sank back in his chair. Thorne sat down and took the package in his hand.

"They are just as your poor father put them away," said Undercliff as Thorne undid the wrapper absently. "Somehow it seemed to be blood money—I could not touch it. I meant you should have it some day."

Thorne ran over the bills carelessly. Suddenly he stopped and scrutinized one closely.

"Look here," he said. "I don't understand this."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Undercliff, drawing near.

"When was the money lost?"

"In '75—July 13, 1875."

"But is this the very same money? I understood you to say it was."

"Yes. I have never touched it, excepting when it was first found."

"But somebody else has touched it."

"Impossible!"

"Then how is it I find a ten dollar note here *of the series of 1876?*" cried Thorne.

CHAPTER III.—HIGH WORDS.

THORNE'S announcement was received by the group about the table with ejaculations which signified their surprise. Mr. Undercliff looked at the young man in blank amazement. His partner shut his teeth tightly upon his lip and a strange, grayish pallor settled about his mouth. The captain simply stared with bulging eyes at the note in Thorne's hand. Carter Monckton, strange to say, looked only at his father; but nobody else noticed the junior partner's distressed features.

"Do you understand?" repeated Thorne. "Here is a note dated a year after the robbery."

"Let me see it?" cried Mr. Undercliff, finding his voice at length

Thorne passed it over. The other examined it wonderingly.

"You are right," he muttered. "I—I can't explain it."

"But—but, sir, don't you see that it *must* be explained?" blurted out Thorne. "If the notes were simply laid in the vault and recovered after two years, how did that one get among them unless they have been tampered with while in your possession?"

"That is impossible!" cried Undercliff. "Nobody can get into this safe but myself. I alone have the key. Even Monckton yonder does not know the combination. In fact, nobody but myself was aware that the notes were there, eh Monckton? It was a surprise to you, was it not?"

The junior partner was forced to wet his lips before replying.

"I certainly had no idea you kept them," he said.

"Then," said Thorne, calmly, "those notes were never lost—they were *stolen and put back again by the thief!*"

"Impossible!" murmured Undercliff.

"It is not impossible," cried Thorne doggedly. "Whoever took the money was able to return it after a time. I thank God that no suspicion can rest upon my father, for he had gone from here. But whoever committed the crime was familiar with your office, and knew when the vault was to be repaired."

"My dear boy, the character of every one of our clerks was beyond question," interposed Undercliff. "Yet to prove to myself that none of them was guilty of the crime in the first place, I had every one followed by my detectives until I was absolutely assured that he was trustworthy. No,

the thief was not among our clerks, that I will swear to. Will not you, Monckton?"

"Yes," replied his partner huskily.

Thorne, for the first time, looked across the table at the junior partner. His eyes gazed searchingly into Monckton's own. The latter's gaze fell. For several moments there was silence.

Then the young fellow turned abruptly to Captain Latimer.

"Well, captain," he said, as though dismissing the subject of the bank-notes entirely, "it is settled that I shall sail with you?"

"That's as you please, sir. I shall be glad to have you aboard."

"But when is your Naida to be ready for sea?"

"Not under a month, sir."

"And I must wait all that time!" exclaimed Thorne.

"Patience, my boy," said Undercliff.

"Patience! why, I could start tomorrow."

"But you would gain nothing by it. You'd have to go to San Francisco and across to Sydney, if you did so, for there's no direct route to Auckland except by sailing vessel."

"A month's the best we can do, sir," said Captain Latimer, rising. "I shall take her down to Rivermouth tomorrow, and save wharf rent. You might join us there, Mr. Thorne, and be gettin' your sea legs, on the way round to New York."

"I'll do it," returned Thorne, and with an awkward bow to the others the old mariner went out.

Immediately the door closed behind him Thorne turned to his guardian.

"Guardy," he said quietly, "there is no possible way in which anybody could have exchanged that note for another since you have had them in your possession?"

"Positively none. I have not had the money in my hands a half dozen times since I first locked the package in that drawer."

"Then, I must have an explanation. You can plainly see that there *was* a crime committed. Either the money was stolen and replaced by the thief, or else——"

"Well, what?" demanded Undercliff.

"It was a plot to ruin my father in your estimation!"

"Tut, tut! what do you mean?"

Thorne looked at Monckton again.

"That money was removed from the safe——"

"But the combination was known only to your father," cried the senior partner nervously.

"It was transferred to paper though."

"And locked in his desk. He admitted it himself."

"And nobody could get into that desk but himself?"

"Why—no—I could," replied Undercliff slowly.

"You only?"

"And—and—Mr. Monckton."

Monckton sprang up with a stifled exclamation.

"What do you mean, you young rascal?" he demanded. "What do you imply by these insinuations?"

"Hush, hush!" exclaimed Undercliff. "You forget yourself, Monckton. And you, Howard, are talking wildly."

But Thorne had risen also; still with his eyes fastened on the junior partner's face.

"Perhaps I *am* talking wildly," he said. "But I mean to probe this mystery to the bottom. I believe there *was* a thief; but it was not my father. But if I live to return to Boston, *I'll find the guilty scoundrel!*"

"You are a fool, young man!" exclaimed Monckton, regaining his mental equilibrium. "When you have recovered from these paroxysms of foolishness I shall expect an apology for your insinuations. I shall listen no longer to you."

He strode to the door and went out, Carter silently following him. When they had gone Undercliff turned to Thorne with pallid face.

"Howard," he said brokenly, "you have hurt me deeply. Your insinuating words were uncalled for."

"Guardy," replied the young man, seizing his hand, "you are the best and most unsuspecting man who ever lived. I suppose I spoke without thinking of the consequences—I always was impulsive. Forgive me, do, and I will keep my suspicions to myself—for the present, at least."

"I forgive you, for I know your words were the outcome of impulse. But I could never even *hint* at such infamy as you suggested—not now, after having once accused a man wrongfully of a crime. Oh, no, never!"

"But answer me one question, Guardy, and I'll promise not to refer to this painful subject again!"

"What is it, my boy?"

"Did Mr. Monckton ever have any occasion to dislike my father?"

Undercliff hesitated a moment.

"Well, there may possibly have been some little ill feeling between them at one time," he admitted slowly.

"What was the cause of it?"

"To tell you the truth, Howard, they both fell in love with the same woman—something which often occurs in this little world. It would seem that, as many women as there are, there would be enough to go around," and he smiled a little sadly.

"Who was she?" asked Thorne.

"Why, your mother, of course."

"Ah! then Mr. Monckton did not like my father because my mother preferred to be Mrs. Thorne rather than Mrs. Monckton?"

"Well, there was a little feeling at one time, as I say. But Monckton is a sensible man. He was married even before your father, and his wife is a very charming woman indeed."

"That is enough," responded Thorne quickly. "I'll say nothing more about it now."

"You have always disliked the Moncktons, my boy, and I never could understand it," said the senior partner, sinking wearily into a chair.

"I guess my dislike is heartily returned," replied Thorne grimly. "As for Carter, he's a contemptible puppy."

"Oh, he'll get over that, I believe. His father gives him too much money, and he doesn't dig into his books enough, that is all," said Undercliff leniently.

"Well, he'll have to 'dig' more and keep out of scrapes in future, or he'll have to satisfy his thirst for knowledge—and his other thirst—at some other seat of learning. He's been up before the faculty twice in a year and a half, and the third time means dismissal, I'm told."

"Well, he's a foolish boy, I suppose. I wish you could have an influence over him."

"I!" cried Thorne, in disgust. "I'd like to influence him with a club."

"Well, well; let it pass. You'll have no trouble with either Carter or his father, while you are away. I shall miss you sadly, my boy, but I want you to go. I know it's not necessary for me to tell you to put forth every effort to find my dear old friend—you have a stronger reason than even I for wishing to bring him home."

"I have," said Thorne, wringing his hand. "And if human power can find that island I'll get to it!"

CHAPTER IV.—A LIVELY INCIDENT AT THE OUTSET.

THORNE spent little time in preparation for the voyage. In three days he was set down with his baggage at the little station of Rivermouth.

The Naida lay at one of the rotting wharves, and was by far the largest craft in the harbor. She was an old fashioned, bluff bowed vessel, about as graceful as a Dutch man o' war, or a Chinese junk, but with great carrying capacity.

Rivermouth boasted a hotel, and after paddling about in the rain to find a native to cart his belongings to the wharf, Thorne sought the hostelry for dinner, having his doubts as to the ability of the Naida's cook. He intended, once in New York, to lay in a supply of canned provisions for his own use.

The hotel was kept by a long legged, sharp voiced Yankee, in a house of colonial architecture. While Thorne waited for the meal to be made ready, the proprietor engaged him in conversation with the laudable intention of "pumping" him upon all sorts of personal topics. As he thwarted the fellow's inquisitiveness, more amused than angered by his pertinacity, Captain Latimer entered.

The captain did not see Thorne, who sat back in the corner, and the hotel proprietor at once turned his attention to the newcomer, as offering a more promising field for the exercise of his unnatural curiosity.

"When does th' Nady sail, Cap'n Latimer?" he asked, by way of leading interrogation.

"I expect to go out on tonight's tide," replied the captain shortly.

"Why, ye hain't got a crew, hev ye?"

"I've enough men to work the brig to New York. Brought her down

from Boston with four men in the fo'castle, an' I reckon I can get around to New York without any more."

"Le's see, where'd I hear the Nady was bound fur this v'yagè?"

"I dunno, Herrick, I'm sure. You can hear almost anything in this town of busybodies," replied the captain sharply.

"Oh, not that *I'm* curious," the other hastened to assure him. "But I jes' asked."

"Yes; well, she's bound back to Aukland, New Zealand, an' mebbe to Australia for a return cargo."

Satisfied on this point, the hotel keeper began on another tack.

"Hem! I s'pose the house'll be opened now," he said, "seein' Sydney's got back from college."

"Sydney's going this trip with me as second mate," returned Captain Latimer, and Thorne detected a note of triumph in his voice.

"Sho! yeou don't say!" exclaimed the other. "Well, well! that's sartainly surprisin'. I persumed college 'd change all that. Didn't know but mabbe yeou'd settle daown here in Rivermouth yersslf, an' give up goin' ter sea."

"Let me tell you, Herrick, that Sydney Latimer, graduate of a high toned college, is just the same as to *sense*, as Sydney Latimer *without* a college education."

Just then he saw Thorne in the corner.

"How d'ye do, sir?" he said, taking the young man's hand in his tar stained palm. "I got your telegram, and we'll be afloat tonight. The carpenters and riggers have got their work done, an' the Naida's as trim as a young girl. The cargo's all ready, an' by working a night shift as well as a day, we'll have it all stowed down in ten days or so."

"That's encouraging."

"Oh, I know just how anxious you are," pursued the captain, while the inquisitive Herrick listened with both eyes and ears wide open. "But you go down to the brig, sir, and Sydney will show you your quarters. The cook's made things as comfortable for you as can be."

He strolled out of the hotel, and after Thorne had eaten his dinner, under a perfect fusillade of questions from the landlord, he went down to the water front. The rain was still falling in an uncertain, drizzling fashion. Three men in tarpaulins were rolling heavy casks from the wharf to the brig's deck, and a figure in a long rubber coat, reaching from neck to heels, and a monstrous sou'wester, directed their movements from the quarter.

"This must be Sydney Latimer," thought Thorne, "the college bred second mate of the Naida. I hope he'll be good company. Wonder what university he hails from?"

It seemed odd for a college graduate, even though he was the son of the captain, to be tramping the quarter deck of a sailing vessel.

The three sailors were still struggling with the cask as Thorne clambered over the rail to the brig's wet deck. As he stood there a moment watching them lower the unwieldy article into the hold, a voice said overhead:

"Do you wish to see Captain Latimer, sir?"

Thorne wheeled about, recognizing the tones of the second mate, who had crossed the quarter, and stood leaning on the rail above. He opened his lips to reply, and then, to his disgrace, stood there, dumb as an oyster, and with probably as idiotic an expression on his face as was possible. Sydney Latimer, second mate of the brig *Naida*, was a girl!

Thorne saw a flush steal into her dark face; but she repeated her question very coolly.

Meanwhile he had opportunity to note that hers was a remarkably attractive countenance. Nothing mannish about her, despite the long rubber coat and the big hat. She was a most pronounced brunette, with small features and rebellious ringlets of short, dark hair framing her face.

"I suppose you are Mr. Thorne?" she said, as he still remained dumb. "Father said he expected you this morning."

By this time Thorne had regained his voice.

"I am delighted to meet you, Miss Latimer," he said, laughing. "Pardon my discourtesy, but I was considerably surprised when I discovered that the *Naida's* second officer was——"

"Was a girl?" finished the other, again blushing.

"Yes," he said. "I hope you won't think me rude; but, really, it was most unexpected."

"I'll forgive you," she returned, frankly. "Now, sir, if you will find Tonio, he will show you to your cabin. I can't leave the deck at present."

Thorne found the cook, a huge mulatto with a rather pleasing face, and was ushered into his stateroom. It was a good sized apartment, and he found his boxes already stacked at the foot of the bed. But he was not anxious to unpack then, and despite the rain went on deck again.

He hadn't been on a vessel like this since he was a boy and used to spend his holidays about the East Boston docks. He wanted to pull on the ropes with the men at the falls, and get tar on his hands, and have a sniff at the stuffy fo'castle.

"I feel like a boy again," he said to Sydney. "I want to poke into all the corners of the brig and mess around. I think there must be a streak of salt water in my blood."

"I'm afraid the brig will be cramped quarters for you before we reach Aukland," she replied, with a smile. "But you are at liberty to poke around to your heart's content."

"I haven't been aboard an old vessel like this for years," he said.

"And you won't get aboard many like it," she returned. "She is one of the oldest vessels in the American trade. But you will have to excuse me, as I am the only officer aboard just at present."

She nodded her curly head with a smile, and turned away to attend to the lowering of the stores into the brig's hold. As Thorne went forward he heard her voice ring out again from the quarter:

"Now then, men, hurry along these casks. Two of you roll them aboard. The others can—by the way, where *is* the fourth man? What's his name, Tom?"

"It's Atwell, sir—I mean, *mum*," one of the sailors replied.

"Where is he?"

"He's below, mum."

"What's the matter with him?" and the clear voice became suddenly stern. "Didn't he understand that all hands were called?"

The three sailors shuffled their feet and looked at one another uneasily. Meanwhile Thorne reached the forecabin and descended, losing the answer to the question.

The brig's forecabin was a low, dark, musty smelling place. There were two tiers of bunks on each side, a big mess chest and several stools in the center, and piles of dunnage in various corners. The place was unoccupied save for a man asleep in one of the lower berths, and it didn't take a second glance to assure the passenger that the fellow's torpor was induced by liquor. The smell of the vile stuff pervaded the atmosphere of the forecabin, and the neck of a black bottle protruded from beneath the blanket that was partially drawn over him.

While Thorne stood looking about the place, one of the other men came below, evidently to fetch the delinquent Atwell.

"Hi, mate! Get up out o' that, and come on deck," cried the sailor, punching the sleeping man vigorously to arouse him.

A sailor hates nothing as much as he does a shirk and considerable energy was expended in this case with evident good will.

"Ow! get out! What're you about?" demanded the man, sitting up suddenly and swinging his legs out of the berth.

"All 'ands 'ave been called, mate. Didn't ye 'ear the summons?"

"Who sent you down here to bother me?" demanded the half drunken sailor fiercely.

"She did."

"Who?"

"That bloomin' second mate."

A torrent of foul language and abuse poured from the man Atwell, and Thorne turned back to the deck, unwilling to listen to it. It made his hands tingle to get hold of the brute. What could Captain Latimer be thinking of — to put his daughter in the way of hearing such talk?

The other sailor quickly followed him and went aft again, and, a moment later, the delinquent stumbled up to the deck. He was in an ugly mood, having imbibed just enough liquor to enhance his naturally surly disposition. As he passed Thorne the latter heard him muttering and swearing to himself and looked after him a little uneasily as he approached the main hatch, near which Miss Latimer was standing, having descended from the quarter.

"You have been long enough a sailor to know that no idlers are allowed aboard ship, Atwell," he heard her say severely. "Turn to with Tom there and lower the casks as they're run aboard."

"I'll turn to when I get ready," declared the fellow, with an oath.

It made Thorne's blood boil to hear him. He expected to see her back down before the man; but she was made of sterner stuff, and Thorne mentally applauded her pluck, though he so strongly disapproved of her position.

"How dare you answer back?" she exclaimed. "Turn to at once, or——"

"Or what?" demanded the fellow, taking a step nearer and clenching his fist.

Thorne believed the cowardly brute would strike her; but she held her ground, although her face went white all of a sudden.

"Belay that, mate!" cried the Cockney sailor Tom, springing forward.

But the passenger was before him. Shifting his umbrella to his left hand he swung his fist and delivered a scientific blow just under the fellow's ear. Atwell went skating across the deck and landed like a log under the rail.

At that instant there was a quick step on the gang plank and Thorne turned to see Captain Joshua Latimer coming aboard on the run.

CHAPTER V.—AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL.

"WHAT does this mean?" demanded Captain Latimer, without a glance in Thorne's direction. His eyes were fixed angrily on Atwell, who was just picking himself up from the deck. "You, Atwell?"

The sailor, pretty well sobered by the blow, held his hand to his head and said nothing.

"He has been drinking, I think, father," interposed Miss Latimer, her voice trembling a little. "He refused to go to work with the other men, and——"

"After what I've done for him, too!" exclaimed Captain Latimer. "You scoundrel, you! If we weren't going to sail tonight, I swear I'd make an example of you."

"You've done a lot for me, you have!" said Atwell, in surly tones. "A-cutting me down from my billet of second mate, an' a-putting *her* in my place," and he pointed his finger at the girl.

"Answer *me* back, will ye?" cried the captain. Then he raised his voice.

"Tonio!" he shouted. "Bring the irons from under my berth. Be quick about it!"

Atwell started as though to escape. But Captain Latimer laid a huge hand upon his shoulder and he stopped where he was. Thorne measured the old man and did not blame the sailor for backing down. A moment later the cook ran from the cabin and handcuffs were snapped upon Atwell's wrists. Then he was hustled forward and dropped down the hatchway. "I reckon you'll cool down some, if you're left to yourself, my man," remarked the captain grimly.

But Thorne saw the look the insubordinate sailor cast in the direction of Miss Latimer and himself as they stood together in the background. It was not a pleasant thing to remember. He was sorry he was to be in the narrow quarters of a sailing vessel for some weeks with a man like that. But when the incident was over, and the sailor disposed of, Captain Latimer seemed to think very lightly of the matter.

"Got liquor somehow, I s'pose," he remarked, as his daughter went calmly back to her duty with the other three seamen. "He's a good man when I can keep drink from him, and no mean navigator. I had to cut him down from second mate's berth last voyage because of it."

"But it's dangerous to have a man like that aboard," expostulated Thorne.

"It's the best we can do these times. Few Americans—and fewer decent men—sail before the mast nowadays. Atwell is an able seaman in every sense of the word."

"But your daughter—I shouldn't think you would want such men sailing in the brig for her sake."

The captain looked as though he thought of telling the young man that it was none of his business, but thought better of it and replied :

"He'd never raised his voice to her if he'd been sober. I'm obliged to you, young man, for the way you used your fins; but as a usual thing the fact that Sydney is a woman would have protected her from insult aboard ship. These rough fellows respect a woman, and she gets better service out of them than any officer I ever had."

"Then this isn't her first voyage with you?" said Thorne.

"Bless you, no! She's been to sea with me, off and on, most of her life."

But there was something in it all that went against Thorne's grain. He couldn't understand how a girl of refined tastes could wish to associate with the rough men of a ship's company, even if her father *was* a member of it.

Yet Sydney Latimer was a perfect lady. During the afternoon, while setting his own quarters to rights, he obtained a glimpse of her private cabin, and it was the most homelike little room he had ever seen.

Thorne got himself settled, and was on deck in time to observe the work of getting the brig under way. The fellow Atwell, thoroughly sobered by Captain Latimer's discipline, was at work with the other men, and did not raise his eyes from the deck. The huge sails were spread by means of patent hoisting apparatus. Miss Latimer took the wheel, and the great vessel sheered off from the dock. The little donkey engine amidships made more commotion than the engines of an Atlantic liner, and the mulatto cook, stripped to his waist, shoveling coal into its maw, looked like an imp in a pantomime.

"Them patent windlasses are great inventions," remarked Captain Latimer, chewing hard on a black cigar as he watched the brig's leeward. "Saves a good ha'f of the help. Never'd be able to work the Naida to New York with four men and a cook in the old days. Why, a craft like this useter ship twenty men before the mast, b'sides carpenters an' sailmakers. I never ship but twelve. Haf to be economical nowadays."

Thorne discovered that Captain Latimer was great on "economy." He had all the true Yankee's thriftiness, was sharp at a bargain, and was more than a little "near," as the saying is.

It was quite dark before the Naida cleared the bar and the swinging lamp was lit in the cheerful cabin when they sat down to supper. Captain Latimer ate hurriedly and went back to the deck; but Sydney, who had laid aside her mannish attire, presided and Thorne began to realize what a really charming girl the second mate of the Naida was.

"I have been to sea with father a great deal," she told him frankly. "I was a very delicate child. You wouldn't believe it now, would you?" and

she laughed, the color coming and going in her round cheek. "The bracing sea air was what I needed. I brought my books aboard and studied hard. I learned navigation, too. I've performed the duties of second mate before, but I was never rated as such till this trip. This is my first voyage for three years, and I enjoy getting back on the old brig once more."

"But," said Thorne doubtfully, "didn't you find it hard to get on with no other woman aboard?"

"Oh, 'Tonio's wife used to go with us when I was small. In fact, she was always aboard until she died four years ago."

"I should think you would be lonesome for female society."

"Oh, *that*?" she said. "Don't think me unwomanly, but girls weary me. Most of those I met at school were afflictions. You see, being so much in father's society, I am more of a man's woman than a woman's woman. Do you understand me?"

Thorne thought he did. But he was doubtful. Such sentiments from a girl were so entirely unlooked for that he didn't know what to think.

The run to New York was very pleasant and Thorne began to take considerable interest in the working of the ship. Especially was this interest manifested when it was Miss Latimer's watch on deck. While the Naida was being loaded Thorne found the time hanging heavily enough on his hands. He tried to busy himself in plans for his voyage of exploration. He purchased charts and books about the South Pacific. But the month which was occupied before the Naida was ready to sail, dragged on leaden wings.

Still, he was glad Mr. Undercliff had advised his coming on to New York with the brig. He could never have been able to stand the delay at home. He received and answered a few letters, among them one from a college friend. A paragraph in the latter's epistle Thorne read over several times.

The news has gone forth that our friend Monckton has left our classic town. He goes on a sea voyage in one of his father's ships, I understand, for his health. But a little bird has whispered in my ear that another investigation by "the powers that be" was pending, and that he saved himself from expulsion by resignation.

"I wonder what craft of Undercliff & Monckton he sails in?" thought Thorne. "He'd be a nice addition to any ship's company—I don't think! Well, thank the Lord, it's nothing to me."

But it did concern him, only it was several days before he found it out. Then he saw 'Tonio doing a vast amount of cleaning in one of the unused staterooms.

"Who's *this* for?" he asked. The officers had already come aboard, and had been assigned their places.

"Goin' ter hab anoder passenger, sah," replied the mulatto, showing his teeth. Passengers meant unlimited tips to 'Tonio, and he would have welcomed a dozen.

"That so?"

"Yes, sah. De son ob one o' de owners. Goin' for he's healf."

Thorne turned on his heel and went to his cabin. Had his journey not been so urgent he would have given up his berth in the brig rather than sail with Carter Monckton.

"Sent with us to keep him from becoming a common drunk, I suppose?" he thought bitterly. "He's a *nice* specimen to sail with decent people."

But Thorne was a gentleman, and he could not poison the minds of Captain Latimer and his daughter against Monckton, and when Sydney mentioned that they were to have the company of another passenger on the voyage, he kept silence. He was tempted to run on to Boston and see Mr. Undercliff. But there was hardly time for that. That very evening the crew came aboard, and the brig was made ready to pull out into the stream at daybreak. Monckton had not arrived, although his luggage had come, and Thorne devoutly hoped that he would not show up in time.

As he sat writing in his cabin after supper, there came a sudden rap on the door. He opened it, and found Captain Latimer and a short, swarthy looking sailor standing without.

"A word with you, sir," said the captain.

"A dozen if you wish, captain," replied Thorne, throwing his door wide open.

The captain motioned the sailor into the room, entered himself, and shut the door.

"D'y'e see his here fellow, Mr. Thorne?" demanded the commander of the Naida.

Thorne nodded.

"Well, sir, you may call it luck, or call it Providence, whichever you like, sir. But there stands the man you'd give a good deal to see, I reckon."

"What do you mean?" cried Thorne, starting up.

"It's the fellow I was telling you of—the one who boarded the brig at Auckland last winter. *He's the man who was brought to Auckland by your father.*"

"Glorious! Where did he come from?"

"He was sent down by the shipping agent," replied Captain Latimer, taking out a cigar. "Plain Providence, I call it. Sit down, Jessop, an' tell Mr. Thorne your story."

The sailor sat down awkwardly. He was a wiry looking little man, with small gold rings in his ears and a network of tattooing on the back of his hands. His age might have been fifty; his nationality doubtful. He had sailed in ships of all countries, and could understand quarter deck commands and abuse in half a dozen languages.

"Let me hear your story," said Thorne encouragingly.

"Speak up, Jessop," said the captain, and the man began.

"Well, sir, I shipped on the coal laden Anna Pixley, from Sydney to 'Frisco—"

"Belay that," interrupted Latimer. "I give him the p'int of your shipwreck, an' that don't interest him. Let's hear about your getting on the island, and what followed."

Jessop gave a hitch to his trousers and went on:

"I don't like to talk about it, gentlemen—it weren't a pleasant 'sperience," he said. "The raft me an' my mates built couldn't hold together nohow in that gale. We didn't have time to make a strong float. Why, sir, when we

left the old Pixley she was blazing clean to her mastheads ! The raft worked apart a good deal that night and nex' day, patch' it as we might, it only just kep' together till dark. We lost two men that afternoon, and before the next morning they were all gone but poor Bob McCann an' me.

"We lashed ourselves to what was left of the raft an' held on. I didn't expect ever to see land again; no more did he. He didn't; but somehow, my part of the wreck hung together an' the current an' gale carried me ashore on this island I speak of. There warn't much to it but cliffs up which a fly could sca'cely crawl, an' a bit of sandy beach. These cliffs went clear round the island and the beach waren't more'n a cable's length wide anywhere. But in two or three places there was clumps o' young palms an' cocoanut trees.

"I managed to get something to eat. And I found water too—sweet, clear water that was the greatest blessin' I'd ever had. Then in this cove I told Cap'n Latimer of, I found the hulk of a ship—the Juan Fernandez, of San Francisco——"

"The very one !" cried Thorne, remembering Mr. Undercliff's story.

"The craft your father sailed on, Mr. Thorne?" demanded Latimer.

"Yes, sir."

"Then you're on the right scent."

"That warn't all," said Jessop, waking up to the significance of the matter when he observed his listeners' excitement. "The boat I sailed in from that island to Aukland was the Juan Fernandez' long boat !"

"How do you know?" cried Thorne.

"Saw it on her bow. The name had been painted over, but not enough to hide it entirely."

"Good !"

"But tell us about the man who rescued you," said Latimer.

"Well, sir, I was there three weeks, an' built myself a shanty of drift an' stuff. I declare to you, gentlemen, that was the peculiarest place I ever heard of. There warn't another streak of land in sight, so where that gent gent could ha' come from, I dunno. But there he was, one morning, boat and all, waiting at my shanty for me to get up.

"You can b'lieve I was surprised. And glad—well, *glad* don't begin to express my feelin's. But he was the queerest codger ever I come across. He never talked, didn't ask me arrything about myself, nor wouldn't answer no questions about *himself*, nor how he got there. He just told me he'd take me to a place where I could find a ship going home. We was weeks on the v'yage, but the weather was good most of the time, an' he had stacks of provisions.

"When we got to Aukland he sold some pearls he had—I went with him to the broker fellows. Then he gi' me a fi' pun note, an' lit out. They told me on the wharves that he stayed only a day or two in Aukland and then left in his boat, steering into the northeast again—the very way we come."

"And that's all?" asked Thorne.

"That's the whole yarn' sir," replied Jessop, rising.

"You can go," said Latimer, holding the door open.

Jessop pulled his forelock and departed; but as he passed Thorne the young man pressed a bank note into his hand.

"Thank you, sir," said the sailor. "Your servant, cap'n."

Thorne paced the deck for a long time that night, his brain busy with plans for the search he was about to undertake. At last, as the city clocks tolled midnight, he was on the point of going below, when there was the rattle of carriage wheels on the street leading down to the dock. The vehicle stopped and Thorne heard several voices in hilarious converse.

He crossed to the shoreward rail. A group of men were staggering down the wharf. One of their number was being shaken by the hand and clapped on the shoulder affectionately by his tipsy companions.

"You're a good feller; drefful sorry to ha—hic—have you go," stammered one youth, and, more demonstrative than the others, he threw his arms about the departing individual's neck.

Thorne knew who it was. It was Carter Monckton. He turned away in disgust as the fellow came stumbling aboard.

"By by, old fel'," chorused the gang, and with a wild whoop they went back to the wait^{ing} carriage.

Thorne had reached the companionway, and there hesitated. Suppose Captain Latimer should see the fool come aboard in that state? Or suppose Sydney should hear him? He had no love for Carter Monckton, but he did not want the New England prejudices of the captain and his daughter to be aroused against the son of their employer. And, like enough, Monckton wouldn't be able to find his stateroom without waking the whole ship's company. He stepped over to the intoxicated fellow and took him by the arm.

"This is a pretty state for you to come aboard in," he said sternly. "I'll get you into your cabin, but don't make a row. There's a lady aboard."

"You're a good feller," responded Monckton, who was in a good natured state of inebriation. "This is the Naida, ain't it?"

"Of course."

"Then I'm—hic—all right," he declared cheerfully, and allowed Thorne to lead him along.

His cabin was next to the one Thorne occupied. The door was unlocked, so the latter got him inside and plumped him into a chair without arousing the steward.

"Why, it's Thorne," exclaimed the intoxicated one, in surprise. "Didn't know 'twas you—'pon my word! You're a better—hic—better feller than I thought. Have a drink?" and he pulled a flask from his pocket and offered it to him.

Thorne looked down upon him contemptuously.

"You're a pretty fellow," he said. "You'll be an addition to this ship's company, I don't doubt! Let me have that flask."

He seized the silver mounted bottle and opening the dead light, threw it into the water.

"That's the best place for *that*," he said.

Monckton arose with drunken gravity.

"You're—you're no zheutleman, sir!" he stammered, with dignity.
 "You've 'sulted me once—twice. Must have sat'sfaction!"

He lurched toward his companion, but Thorne stepped aside and went out, leaving Monckton sprawling at full length on the stateroom floor.

CHAPTER VI.—COMING TO BLOWS.

THORNE persistently avoided his fellow passenger from the first day at sea. The *Naida* was towed out into the stream early in the morning, and before noon she passed Sandy Hook, and, spreading all her sails like a huge winged sea bird, was fairly started on her long voyage. The crew and officers were hard at work, and it was very nearly night before the litter occasioned by getting under way was quite cleared up and the deck made tidy and shipshape once more.

Thorne saw little of Sydney that first day, but he made the acquaintance of the first and third officers—Mr. Sessions, a red headed little man with a thin, piping voice, and Mr. Pepper, a big, bluff voiced, jolly fellow with a hand like a ham.

Monckton kept to his cabin most of that day—probably sleeping off the effects of his last night's carousal ashore. When he *did* appear on deck toward dusk, Thorne turned his back and walked away. He was determined to have no conversation with him after the disgusting scene of the previous night. But the steward had placed their plates side by side at the table, and at supper Thorne was obliged to introduce Monckton to Miss Latimer and the mates, as the captain was on duty.

It was plain that Sydney was not ill pleased with the son of the junior partner of the firm that owned the *Naida*. Monckton exerted himself to entertain her, and Thorne saw, with a strange feeling of uneasiness, that he was making a favorable impression. He could not explain to himself why he should care. He had no personal interest in Miss Latimer. Indeed, he was hardly sure that he quite approved of her. Monckton *was* a gentlemanly appearing fellow, and he had "a way with him" that would attract most people. But Thorne could hardly take it upon himself to warn Sydney or her father of the notoriously bad character of Carter Monckton. They must find it out for themselves. He did determine, however, to give the fellow as little opportunity to cultivate Miss Latimer's acquaintance *alone* as possible. But here circumstances—or fate—interfered.

The second day a little blow came up, followed by a heavy swell. Thorne, who was ordinarily a good sailor, had to take to his berth. He lay flat on his back for four days, and lived a simple and blameless life on toast and beef tea. When he got upon deck again he found Monckton and Sydney Latimer as chummy as though they had known each other for years. Monckton hadn't been ill an hour, and had the cheek to come around and commiserate Thorne on his weak stomach,

"I presume, if my stomach was preserved in alcohol, I shouldn't have been affected by the motion of the brig, either," replied Thorne cuttingly.

Miss Latimer heard him, and he saw by the look on her face that she

considered it to be a boorish remark. And the worst of it was, Monckton "took the trick" by appearing hurt and walking off without uttering a reply. Sydney moved away, too, but Thorne heard from it later through the captain.

"You're kinder rough on that Monckton," said he, good naturedly. "But he don't seem ha'f a bad sort. I hear he got into kinder wild comp'ny at college, an' he's takin' this v'yge to help him brace up. Never kick a man when he's down, is my motto."

Thorne wondered what he would say if he had seen Monckton when he came aboard at New York. But he bit his lip and made no reply to the good captain's pacific remarks. But he had injured himself with Sydney by his thoughtless retort and, argue with himself as he might, it troubled him, but he continued to avoid Monckton, and in so doing deprived himself of her society also. This was a trial, for, greatly as he disliked the idea of a girl holding the position she did on the *Naida*, her strong character had not failed to impress him. She made herself respected by all on board, and her calm judgment and knowledge of seamanship, was the open wonder of the other mates.

"Most wonderful girl I ever see," declared Mr. Pepper, "an' I was born on the Cape, where gals, as well's boys, can sail a boat 'fore they get out of pinafores."

And the little first mate agreed.

It was plain that Captain Latimer quite worshiped her, and trusted in her judgment in many things. But Thorne thought that among the men the satisfaction was not so general. They obeyed her well enough, but they evidently did not think it right in the captain to put a woman over them. Without a doubt Atwell fanned this flame of discontent.

As the days passed and the brig ran into warmer latitudes, the situation became still more strained. Thorne's face more than once expressed his disapproval when he saw Monckton and Sydney walking the deck together, or talking in the cabin during her watch below. Sydney resented it and showed her resentment by treating Thorne more coolly while not abating her friendliness with Monckton in the least.

Between the crew and the captain there was ill feeling, too, and every day it became more and more apparent. As has before been hinted, Captain Joshua Latimer was more than a little "close." The cabin table was very well, though plainly, supplied, and Thorne but seldom resorted to his private stores. But the food supplied the seamen was of course another matter. The quality was all right—that is, the "salt horse" was of good quality, and the cook made eatable bread; but the quantity was what the men grumbled about. Captain Latimer was so economical that he doled out the food very grudgingly to 'Tonio for the fo'castle mess.

This was a small matter, but in the mouth of a man like Atwell it became great. And, more than once, Thorne suspected that Atwell and some of his mates got liquor from some mysterious source. Captain Latimer was a strictly temperate man, and all the liquor supposed to be aboard the *Naida* was a little for medicinal purposes, locked up in the commander's cabin.

It was quite certain, too, that Monckton had none. In fact, the third mate, Mr. Pepper, told him that the agreement when old Monckton wrote for his son's passage was that no liquors were to be allowed aboard. Evidently the intention had been to make an effort to reform Carter, and Thorne was forced to admit that up to the present time the fellow had behaved himself very respectably. The only liquor he had managed to bring on board was that in the pocket flask which Thorne had unceremoniously thrown overboard the night of his arrival. And Monckton hadn't forgiven him that, either. Thorne thought possibly the fellow was too drunk to remember the occurrence, but one evening he was disabused of that idea.

The trouble started with a very innocent discussion between Sydney and Thorne at the supper table. The argument waxed warm, though in a spirit of perfect friendliness, until Monckton put in a word. Sydney tacitly admitted him into the discussion by replying; but Thorne very foolishly showed that he was nettled by the fellow's uncalled for interference, and dropped the subject at once.

The cut was so direct that even Monckton's egotism was pierced. He flushed and passed several sharp comments, making Thorne the butt of the others' laughter by turning his former arguments into ridicule. Thorne bit his lip, but made no reply until Miss Latimer had gone on deck. Then, as Monckton still pursued his raillery, he reached one long arm over the table and knocked his persecutor out of his chair.

The cabin was in a tumult in an instant. Monckton's bantering was changed to ungovernable rage. He sprang up with an imprecation, and both Mr. Sessions and Mr. Pepper got up also. Chairs were tipped over, and for an instant it looked as though Monckton would spring over the table at the throat of his antagonist.

Thorne alone remained in his chair, his eyes on Monckton's face, his own features as pale as death. Outwardly he was as calm as the tropical sea at that instant; inwardly he was full of a mad desire to seize the fellow and follow up that single blow with a sound thrashing.

"You miserable hound!" cried Monckton, finding his breath.

His fingers crept behind him and sought his hip pocket. He was quite beside himself with rage.

"Calm yourself," said Thorne coldly, "*and take your hand away from that thing in your pocket!* As sure as you try to draw it on me I'll break every bone in your body."

Monckton looked into the other's face and quailed. His fingers returned to their normal position.

"You bully!" he sputtered. "You thief!"

Then Thorne stood up.

"I'll thank you not to apply that term to me again," he said, so quietly that Monckton would have been warned by it had he not been so utterly beside himself with rage.

"I repeat it—you *are* a thief! the son of a thief!" he hissed.

Instantly Thorne leaped fairly over the cabin table, and, seemingly with the same motion, landed his clenched fist on the point of Monckton's chin.

The fellow went down like a log and lay there without stirring, and at that very dramatic point Captain Latimer came hastily down the stairway.

"What's this! what's this, gentlemen?" he demanded. "A low row in *my* cabin? What does it mean? What did you strike him for, Mr. Thorne?"

Thorne was silent. Pepper had raised Monckton into a chair, but neither he nor Sessions seemed willing to reply. Monckton himself was still too dazed to explain.

"What is it? I demand an answer, sir!" cried the old man, with dignity. "This cabin is my home. You are a passenger, Mr. Thorne, but you are also my guest. You have attacked another of my guests. Such an act is an insult to me."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Latimer," said Thorne. "I considered the Naida a public conveyance—not your home. Had I for a moment suspected that you looked upon it as such I would have restrained myself, great though the provocation might have been."

"I gave you no provocation, in the first place," snarled Monckton. "Not till you had tipped me out of my chair."

"I heard you call him a thief, sir!" interrupted the captain severely. "*You* can keep quiet."

"He *is* a thief," exclaimed Monckton wildly, "and his father was before him. It was only the night I came aboard the Naida that he snatched something from my hand, and I haven't seen it since——"

"Yes," said Thorne quickly, "a flask of liquor. It's at the bottom of the East River. You came aboard too drunk to know your right hand from your left."

"Stop!" commanded Captain Latimer sternly. "This discussion has gone far enough. You'd better go and get something on that jaw of yours before it gets stiff, Mr. Monckton—and as for you, sir," turning to Thorne, "I'll thank you to keep quiet for a bit. Let us all cool down before we discuss this further. You are altogether too quick with your fins, sir."

Thorne turned on his heel and went to his cabin. He was consumed with rage—mostly at his own hot headed stupidity for allowing himself to be drawn into such a disgraceful scene.

When Captain Latimer heard the full particulars of the trouble from his two officers, he went to Thorne and frankly admitted that he had judged him too harshly.

"But I cannot understand your attitude toward young Monckton. You have scarcely treated him decently since he joined us."

"If you knew him as well as I, Captain Latimer, you would not be so surprised at my avoidance of him, nor would you care to have your daughter make the acquaintance of a man of such character."

"Hold on!" said the captain sternly. "Don't you drag my daughter's name into this affair. I forbid it. Your interference is unpardonable."

Thorne sprang up in a rage.

"Very well," he said. "Our interview is quite at an end, I believe. This is my private cabin, sir."

He held the door open for the old man to pass out, and for days they scarcely spoke to each other. Miss Latimer seemed to share her father's feelings, and Thorne found himself fairly companionless aboard the brig.

CHAPTER VII.—MISCHIEF AFOOT.

IN this state of affairs Thorne began to take more or less notice of Jessop, the sailor from whose account of his meeting with Edgar Thorne the young man had gained such hope. Thorne had before been friendly with him, and often, in the dog watch, which is the one time during the day when sailors are comparatively free, had questioned him minutely about the strange island on which he had been cast and concerning the stranger individual who had rescued and carried him to New Zealand. Jessop had agreed to accompany Thorne on his voyage of exploration, providing Captain Latimer would release him at Aukland.

Feeling himself cut off from the society of the cabin, to a great extent at least, Thorne talked a deal more with the sailor. He bent all his own energies of thought upon plans for his voyage and found that Jessop, because of his long seafaring experience, was no mean adviser. Between them, before the Horn was weathered, they made out a long list of articles to be purchased in addition to the general provisioning of the craft Thorne was to engage, and laid out, with the aid of the charts, their course from Aukland to the vicinity of the mysterious island. As to the crew and the boat—they would depend upon circumstances.

"If it's all the same to you, Mr. Thorne," said Jessop, on one occasion, "I wish Tom Shields was a goin' along." (Tom was the Cockney sailor who had been aboard the *Naida* when Thorne joined her at Rivermouth.) "If Cap'n Latimer would let *him* go, too, he would be worth a good deal to you."

"How?"

"He's been a good bit about this 'ere ocean. He was cast away twice on the islands an' knows all about 'em, though he never hear tell of this islan' I was on."

"I don't think Captain Latimer would let me have two men," said Thorne. "Does this Shields want to go with me?"

"He wouldn't kick none if he got a chance to leave the brig," replied Jessop.

"Why not?"

"Well, he an' I ain't one o' Atwell's crowd, that's all," and Jessop turned away.

Thorne treasured these words in his memory. He had noticed, with growing concern, the disaffection among the sailors. And that Atwell was at the bottom of it he did not doubt. What he did *not* know was that the officers of the brig viewed his own friendliness with Jessop with suspicion. The gulf which separates the cabin and the fo'c'sle is well nigh as impassable as that mentioned in Holy Writ as lying between the two conditions of man's

soul in the hereafter. When there is any trouble aboard ship it is seldom that any of the crew openly side with the officers. The captain and mates are the sailors' sworn enemies (so Jack Tar believes—too often with good reason) and whether the men approve of all their leaders do or not, they seldom stand out against them. The cook usually remains neutral. On the *Naida* the cook, 'Tonio, had sailed with Captain Latimer for twenty years and loved Sydney as though she had been his own child. The sailors did not trust 'Tonio. And Thorne, innocently enough, was causing, by his familiarity with Jessop, doubts to arise in the minds of Captain Latimer and his officers. One or two little outbreaks had already occurred, and affairs between those before and those abaft the mainmast were very strained.

Thorne continued to avoid the officers, including Sydney, and his fellow passenger; he seldom appeared at the common table, taking most of his meals in his own cabin and paying 'Tonio something extra for his trouble. When not shut into his private quarters, he paced the deck alone, or conversed with the sailors when they were off duty.

Thus far the *Naida* had experienced a remarkably pleasant voyage. But now she ran into regular Cape Horn weather. It was dangerous to hug the coast in the gale which burst over them when off Terra de Fuego, so they steered for the southeast and ran some days out of their course before the storm. Finally it passed and the brig was put on her route again. But that first gale seemed but a mild taste of what was in store for her. Three days after she passed the Cape another gale struck her and the *Naida* staggered on under the blow like a wearied courser. The sea sprang a few planks in her old hull this time, too, and from that time on the clank of the pumps was heard for a part of every day.

There is nothing that will take the heart out of a sailor like the sound of the pumps. The leak did not gain on them, but the old brig was badly strained and nobody knew what the next blow would do to her. The crew became more reckless than ever and the officers had more difficulty in controlling them.

Monckton stayed below most of the time during the bad weather. But Thorne, whose muscles of steel and cool head made him of valuable assistance, turned to with the men and worked as hard as any of them. And his aid was appreciated, for the brig was manned by as small a crew as the law allowed—another result of Captain Latimer's economy.

Yet Thorne had incased himself in a shell of dignified silence through which neither captain nor officers could break, much as they appreciated his help. Miss Latimer *did* try, but the attempt ended disastrously. Finding Thorne leaning over the port rail one day after the force of the second tempest had spent itself, she broke the ice by saying, pleasantly:

"You make a very good sailor, for a 'green hand', Mr. Thorne. You seem to take to it very naturally."

"I believe I told you, when I first came aboard, that I thought there was a streak of salt water in me somewhere," he returned, smiling. It was the first time she had put herself out to speak to him in two weeks, and he was determined to show her he felt no resentment.

"Yes, father said you were as good as two men in some things. By the time you get to Auckland and start on your *real* voyage, you will know considerable about seafaring matters."

"Yet I began by being woefully sick, you know."

"That is nothing. Father says that many men who make the best of sailors are seasick at first. Why, you are a much better sailor than Mr. Monckton, although he was not ill at all."

The expression of Thorne's face changed instantly at the mention of Monckton's name.

"Yes?" he said coldly, and the pause which followed was actually painful.

Sydney flushed warmly. It angered her that the mere mention of Carter Monckton's name should have been received in such a manner.

"Mr. Thorne," she said hastily, "I think you do Mr. Monckton an injustice in—in thinking of him as you do, and acting so toward him."

"Indeed?" responded Thorne, and for an instant his eyes fairly blazed into hers.

"I do," she said, still more nettled. "I do not think it honorable in you to judge him so harshly because of what may have been his former conduct. A great many young men sow wild oats——"

But Thorne was too disgusted to listen quietly. How could any woman speak of a man like Monckton so leniently? He forgot for the moment that Sydney Latimer was entirely unfamiliar with Monckton's true character. The fellow had been extremely careful to keep his better qualities uppermost.

"Excuse me, Miss Latimer," he said. "As you consider me so lacking in honor, I will relieve you of my presence. Mr. Monckton is coming yonder, I see; he will doubtless be much pleasanter company."

He bowed formally, and turned abruptly away. He did not look back, and therefore failed to see that Sydney, instead of greeting Monckton, turned also and hastened below, leaving the other passenger looking after her in great amazement.

Thorne bitterly upbraided himself for his own display of childish pique. He admitted, in the privacy of his own cabin, that that term more nearly fitted it than aught else. He had never met a girl before in whom he had taken interest enough to care *whom* she made her friends. But for some reason it was galling to him to have Sydney Latimer so familiar with a man of Carter Monckton's stamp.

"Can't she see through him?" he thought, in disgust. "Is she blind? I swear I thought she had more character."

And then he tried to make himself believe that he didn't care a sixpence, any way; but with slight success. Sydney did not attempt to "make up" with him again, however, and affairs went on about as ever on the brig. Thorne was with Jessop even more now. He often helped him at his work or talked with him while off duty.

"I'm thinkin', sir, 'twould have been a great saving of time for you if the brig had touched at Valparaiso," said the sailor, one evening as they leaned over the rail together just forward of the main hatch.

"You could have got just what you wanted there in the line of a craft for your exploring trip."

"But the Naida would have been a long way off her course."

"No more'n she's like to be now," muttered Jessop.

"Maybe Captain Latimer was afraid he would lose some of his crew if he put in there," said Thorne, giving the sailor a sidelong glance.

"It would ha' been a good thing all round if he *did* lose some of 'em," growled Jessop.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Thorne.

But the man only shook his head gloomily.

"Come, Jessop," said Thorne, "do you scent trouble—serious trouble—through this Atwell?"

"Sh! Belay that, sir," whispered the man. "See yonder?"

He motioned with his stumpy thumb in the direction of the fore-castle. There, just in the shadow, were two men in close conversation. Thorne moved so that he could see them better, while yet not appearing to look. He recognized one as Sam Atwell.

"Who's with him?" he asked.

Jessop did not reply, for then the two men separated. Atwell dodged into the fore-castle, but the other came aft. As he passed the cook's quarters the light from the galley fire shone full on his face. It was Carter Monckton.

After the passenger had disappeared into the cabin, Thorne turned quietly to Jessop.

"How long has *that* been going on?" he asked.

"This hain't the first time," responded the sailor, non-committally.

"But what does it mean?"

"Rum," replied Jessop bluntly.

"What!" cried Thorne, horrified. "Does Atwell supply Monckton with liquor?"

Jessop nodded.

"I suspected Atwell had some, although I didn't see how he could have smuggled it aboard. Captain Latimer watched him like a hawk while we lay in New York."

"He got it fast enough," said the sailor shortly.

"But I wouldn't have believed that Monckton would stoop to such a method of getting the stuff."

"Well, if a man wants a drink, I reckon he don't care much how he gets it," returned the sailor carelessly. "They tell me that young chap's been a high roller ashore; he's likely to be somethin' wuss before he sees the last of the Naida."

"I can hardly believe it," said Thorne, paying little attention to Jessop's last words. "I haven't seen him intoxicated since the night he came aboard."

"Oh, Lord, sir!" exclaimed Jessop, with a chuckle, "he's a sharp one. I heard Atwell sayin' he was drunk below in his berth most o' the time durin' that last bit of a blow. Sam passed the drink through the cabin light to him."

"See here," said Thorne gravely, "what is Atwell up to? What does he think he'll make out of Mr. Monckton?"

Jessop was silent, his brown fingers drumming a light tattoo on the brig's rail.

"Come," went on Thorne. "What's brewing? I am convinced that the man means mischief. What sort of mischief is he up to?"

"I don't know nothin' about it, Mr. Thorne," responded Jessop surlily. "I hain't got Sam Atwell's confidence. Me'n' my mate, Tom Shields, keeps to ourselves."

"But you must suspect something——" began Thorne.

"An' what we suspects we keeps to ourselves, likewise," interrupted Jessop. He turned abruptly away and strode forward, leaving Thorne in a maze of doubt and perplexity.

CHAPTER VIII.—CARTER MONCKTON INTERFERES.

THE "clink-clank! clink-clank!" of the brakes throbbed through the ship until every one felt the sound grate upon his nerves. Thorne heard even burly Mr. Pepper growling to the first mate, one day, that "the old man should have put in to Valparaiso for repairs." But although they were nearly in the latitude of the Chilian port, they were a long way to the westward of it. To run back would have meant an enormous waste—in the captain's opinion—of both time and food. And had he wished to run back, this soon became impossible. A third gale drove the brig into the northwest—a gale which each hour increased in violence.

At first it was welcomed, for the wind blew steadily, and although it was carrying the old *Naida* to the north of her true course, it would be an easy matter to run south again when the blow ceased. But as the days passed it seemed to have no intention of ceasing. With but a few square feet of canvas spread, the *Naida* flew before the hurricane, and although a few seas broke over her, the waves wrenched her sorely.

The crew became more surly. Even the cook was unmanageable. The mulatto was a superstitious creature, and he declared he had seen a ghost in the brig's hold when he was down overhauling the stores. There was an entrance through the bulkhead of the galley into the hold, and 'Tonio got to his pantry in that way. There was no other way to get into the lower part of the brig but by the hatches, and they were battened down. But the cook swore he had seen a man climbing about over the cargo, and the captain had to detail Mr. Pepper to "break out" such stores as were needed.

As the gale continued Thorne noticed that Carter Monckton kept below most of the time. As for himself, he stayed on deck, ready to lend a hand to anything that might come up.

One day, after a particularly heavy sea had boarded the brig, and had soaked him to the skin, he went below for dry apparel. The cabin was empty, but as he descended the stairs the door of Monckton's stateroom was flying open and its occupant, wild eyed and but half dressed, rushed out into the main cabin.

"What is it?" he yelled. "Is she sinking? What shall I do!"

He grabbed Thorne by the arm. His eyes were bloodshot; his face pale as death. There was no need to ask what was the matter with the fellow. He had been drinking heavily; that was plain.

"Come, behave yourself!" exclaimed Thorne, shaking his arm free. "Go back to your bunk and sober up—d'ye hear? The brig isn't sinking. We only shipped a big wave, that's all."

He pushed Monckton into his room again and shut the door.

"Pah!" he muttered, as he entered his own cabin. "And that's the fellow whose society our captain's daughter prefers to mine?"

But the hurricane blew itself out at length and the hot sun shone from an unfleeced sky once more. The captain was able to take his first observation for nearly a fortnight.

Jessop was standing near Thorne when its result was made known. He uttered an involuntary exclamation.

"What is it?" asked the young man.

"Why, sir, we're mighty close to the spot where the Anna Pixley was when she took *her* last observation. That island——"

"Well, what about the island?" demanded Thorne eagerly, as Jessop hesitated.

"It ought to be pretty nigh due north o' here—as I could figure it out."

Thorne rushed below and examined his chart. The sailor was right. The long continued gale had blown the Naida so far off her course that she was now but a short distance from that portion of the South Pacific where the strange island on which Jessop had been wrecked was situated. A great desire to reach the island—to reach it at once—seized upon Thorne. *Could* he wait to make the rest of the passage to Auckland and then work back again before sighting the island on which Edgar Thorne might be living? He felt as though he could not.

He went in search of the captain. The Naida was already being put about on a more southerly tack.

"Captain Latimer," he began eagerly, "do you realize where we are?"

"H-m-m! what d'ye mean? I've just taken my observation," responded the captain, with a twinkle in his eye. "I reckon I've got it straight, sir."

"I mean, do you know that we are in that part of the ocean in which the Anna Pixley burned?"

"Great Scott! no!" exclaimed the captain. "Where's the chart?"

Thorne had brought his with him. He showed him the place he had marked on the map as being about the position of the island on which Jessop had been cast.

"Jessop says it must be almost due north of here—and it can't be far," pursued Thorne. "Can't you put the Naida on the opposite tack for a day or so? We may come across it."

Captain Latimer looked excited. He examined the chart closely.

"It would take us a good bit off our course," he muttered thoughtfully, "an' the Lord knows this is a going to be a long enough run, as it is. I dunno what Undercliff & Monckton will say."

"I'll be answerable for Mr. Undercliff," said Thorne. "I feel sure he would say 'Do it!'"

"But there's a mighty big chance of our not hitting it in a week of Sundays," returned the captain. "And then again," he admitted, "we might run slap up against it, first thing."

"It can't make much matter," urged Thorne; "we're so far off our course already."

"Let's see what Sessions thinks about it," said the captain. He raised his voice and shouted for the first mate.

Mr. Sessions approached and the third officer also joined them.

"See here," said Latimer, "what d'ye think of this? You know what Mr. Thorne has come out with us for? He figures that this very island he is after isn't far to the nor'ward of us at this blessed minute. He wants we should put the brig on a northerly course for a day or two and see if we can strike the island. What d'ye think, Sessions? You're acquainted with these latitudes."

The mate took Thorne's chart and eyed it critically.

"I don't know," he said, slowly.

"What's the prospect of another storm?" went on Latimer. "That's the principal thing. I dunno as the old brig'll stand many more such strains before she sees a dry dock. Have you tried the well this morning, Mr. Pepper?"

"No, sir."

"Do so, then."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"I don't see as there is much objection to such a course, Captain Latimer," said Mr. Sessions slowly.

"If Mr. Sessions doesn't, I do," interrupted a new voice.

Thorne wheeled about and glared into the face of Carter Monckton.

"Well, sir, what have *you* got to say about it?" demanded Captain Latimer in surprise.

"I object to the Naida being run an inch off her course," replied Monckton calmly.

"Is that so?" cried the captain, the blood surging to his face.

"Yes. I don't blame you, captain," pursued Monckton, "but this has been an expensive voyage for Undercliff & Monckton, and every day we are detained adds to the expense. I represent my father in the matter, and I forbid it."

Nobody spoke for fully a minute.

Mr. Sessions, with an expression of intense disgust on his face, turned and walked aft to the wheel.

"What do you mean by this interference?" demanded Thorne, his wrath blazing forth. "Are you drunk again?"

"Hold on, Mr. Thorne!" exclaimed Latimer. "Let *me* attend to this, I pray. I hope I'm captain on my own deck yet, though I begin to doubt it when you two fellows get to quarreling."

But Monckton responded to Thorne's bitter question.

"You'll not take *this* vessel off her course on any wild goose chase, Mr. Thorne. If you want to explore the whole South Pacific for mythical islands, you'll not do it in a ship of Undercliff & Monckton's."

"And how long since *you* were constituted the representative of the firm?" queried Thorne.

"I am the sou of one of the partners; not a mere dependent—a pauper—who has been a charitable charge on a rich man all his life."

"Be still, Mr. Monckton," interposed Captain Latimer.

"No, let him go on," said Thorne, with suppressed fury. "There is good reason why he—and his father—should not want me to find that island, and bring Edgar Thorne back to the world. I believe that."

"Nonsense! Why should *we* care what becomes of your father?" rejoined Monckton hastily. "I only object to the Naida's being used in such a foolish search. Captain Latimer has his orders—"

"And he knows 'em," interrupted the captain gruffly, "without no young whippersnapper tellin' him."

Thorne seized Monckton by the arm and held him against the rail.

"Do you think by *this* to stop me from finding my father?" he asked. "I'll bring him back to America if he is above ground, and, if I *can't* find him, I'll move heaven and earth to clear his name of the suspicion that once rested on it, and I'll fasten the stain on the guilty one! Tell your father that!"

"Gentlemen! gentlemen! what do you mean?" exclaimed Latimer. "This is unseenly—it is disgraceful. I——"

At that instant Mr. Pepper approached the group on the quarter. His face was drawn and white, his hands trembled.

"Here's awful news, captain!" he stammered; "the brig leaks like a sieve! There's seven feet o' water in the well!"

CHAPTER IX.—OPEN REBELLION.

HAD a bomb been exploded in the group, those composing it could not have scattered more quickly. Captain Latimer turned like a flash and leaped to the main deck. Thorne let go of Monckton and followed, with Pepper, to the pump well.

The sailors who had gathered about the pump fell sullenly back as the officers approached. Atwell was there, and his mutterings reached the captain's ear.

"Stop that chattering, you rascal, and get to work here," he exclaimed, chalking the pole and dropping it into the well.

When he drew it up it was plain that the third mate's declaration was only too true. The water stood above the seven foot mark.

"Catch hold here, four of you!" sang out Captain Latimer.

His commands were uttered in quick, jerky sentences. He became in that instant an entirely different man from the easy going, slow spoken Yankee skipper who had thus far occupied the quarter deck.

"Think we can pump the whole thundering ocean through her?" growled Atwell, hanging back.

Quick as a flash Latimer caught him a swinging blow which knocked him into the scuppers.

"This is no time for your capers, my man!" he said. "Mr. Pepper, get a fire started under the engine. That'll suck the bilge out of her in short order. Meanwhile, do you fellows keep these brakes going, or I'll keelhaul every mother's son of you."

Atwell picked himself up, and his hand stole into the bosom of his woolen shirt. There was a lump there which assured the watchful Thorne that the fellow was armed. But the sailor did not draw the weapon. Instead, he slunk away to the forecabin.

Jessop came aft to the pumps near which Thorne stood.

"That chap's got it in for the cap'n, sir," he muttered in Thorne's ear. "There'll be bad times here yet. I wish we'd put in to Valparaiso, an' I'd get out of her—I do!"

"If there's trouble, can we depend upon you and Shields?" asked the passenger.

"You can depend on Tom an' me to keep strictly nootral," returned Jessop quickly. "We ain't lookin' for trouble with eight or ten drunken fools—not we! An' ev'ry one armed to the teeth, at that!"

"Drunken? What do you mean?" asked Thorne.

"I mean, Mr. Thorne, that every one of 'em, save me an' Tom, if I can keep it away from him, will be fighting drunk before night. Atwell's gone for the stuff now."

"Great heavens!" whispered Thorne, in an agony of apprehension. "How can you speak so calmly about it? Where does he keep the stuff?"

Jessop shook his head.

"Not in the fo'c'stle," he said. "That's all I know about it."

Thorne quickly ran to the cabin, where Captain Latimer had gone. He found him with Sydney, anxiously bending over a chart, marking out the course for the nearest inhabited land, for reference, if the leak really proved serious. The girl was perfectly calm, and even in the midst of his own anxiety Thorne felt a flash of admiration for her.

He repeated what Jessop had told him. Mr. Sessions came out of his stateroom while he was talking, and Monckton came from his. The latter passed the group without a word and went on deck. But he had heard all Thorne had to say.

"What had we better do, father?" asked Sydney. "I fear the liquor more than I do the men."

"Search the forecabin and find it," said Mr. Sessions. "I've suspected they had the stuff more than once. We'll throw it overboard."

"Right ye are!" declared the captain. "We'll destroy it. I thought I had kept Atwell from bringing it aboard this voyage."

Thorne had stepped to the other side of the room where he could see up the companionway. Monckton was listening at the head of the stairs. He disappeared the instant he saw himself observed.

"If you want to do that," exclaimed Thorne, quickly turning to the officers, "go after that fellow and bring him back."

"Who?"

"Monckton. He has gone to warn Atwell of your purpose," replied the passenger.

"Impossible, Mr. Thorne!" cried Captain Latimer, while Sydney turned her back upon him.

Thorne was furious.

"This is no time for mincing matters," he said harshly. "That fellow has been supplied all through the voyage with drink by Atwell. I tell you he has gone to warn him of your plans now."

"Either you are a fool, or I am one!" cried the captain tartly.

"Thank you," responded the younger man. "We have held different opinions on that point right along, and by the looks of things now I believe you will be proven the fool. But enough of this. I tell you he has gone to speak with Atwell. I call on you to go with me and prove or disprove my statement!"

He led the way to the deck. Captain Latimer and the mate followed him.

As they made their appearance, one of the sailors uttered a shrill whistle. The next instant Monckton came out of the forecabin. Captain Latimer's eyes blazed as he strode forward.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded, pushing Thorne aside and looking at Monckton searchingly. "Go aft, sir, and keep away from the sailors' quarters."

Then he descended into the forecabin, Thorne and Sessions close upon his heels. The place was deserted save for Sam Atwell, who reclined in a berth.

"Get up out o' here, you lazy lout," roared Latimer. "Is this a time for a man to be lying abed? You go up too, Mr. Sessions, and send 'Tonio here to me."

Atwell got up slowly and moved hesitatingly toward the entrance.

"Stir your stumps!" said the exasperated little mate.

Atwell was almost twice his size, but Sessions had enough pluck for half a dozen men, and more muscle than Thorne would have imagined from his appearance. He seized the sailor by the collar and slack of his trousers and actually pitched him forward on his hands and knees.

"Get up on deck there!" he exclaimed, and followed his command with a sound kick which added very much to the celerity with which the fellow obeyed.

Grim as the situation was, Thorne laughed.

"Ordinarily I don't approve of an officer striking a man aboard ship," remarked Captain Latimer, with a peculiar smile, "but if ever a chap needed a first class licking, that Sam Atwell does."

"Tonio came down to them in a minute.

"Yank every living thing out o' these bunks, cook," said Latimer. "An' s'arch every man's kit. If there's liquor here I'll have it."

"Jessop says it's not kept in the forecabin," remarked Thorne mildly.

"Yes. That's because he doesn't want it found, likely."

Thorne saw that there was no use trying to break down quarter deck prejudice, so he stood by in silence and watched 'Tonio's fruitless search.

"It's no use, Massa Latimer," declared the cook. "Dere ain't no whisky hyar. I'se s'arched eberyting."

Captain Latimer led the retreat to the deck in gloomy silence. As they came out of the forecandle his eyes rested on a scene amidships which brought an exclamation of dismay to his lips. Back to back against the mainmast stood the mates, Sessions and Pepper, the former with a drawn revolver, the latter holding a pump brake aloft in his brawny hands. The sailors were grouped about the pump and Atwell was talking loudly.

Tom Shields, the Englishman, was at the wheel and Jessop stood beside him leaning on the rail, his back to the scene as though it had not the slightest interest for him. But while Captain Latimer and the cook stared at this, Thorne's gaze was attracted by something entirely different. Rolling up from the south was a sinister looking mass of cloud, its upper edge of a strange copper hue. It was bearing directly for the brig and driving the sea in a hissing white wave before it.

CHAPTER X.—THE TOWERING CLIFF.

"Mutiny, Captain Latimer!" roared Mr. Pepper, seeing his superior, with the cook and Thorne, appear at the forecandle door. "The scoundrels refuse to work the pumps."

"We've jerked these old pump brakes long enough," cried Atwell. "We'll do it no longer."

"An' right ye are, mate!" growled one of his backers. "Let the old tub sink."

"We'll take to the boats an' let her go down an' be hanged to her!" chimed in a third.

The men were in earnest, and glowered defiantly at their officers.

"Fools!" shouted the captain, beside himself with wrath. "If there *is* a leak the brig will sink while you're monkeying this way."

"Mebbe we *are* fools," returned Atwell. "But we ain't goin' to be starved an' kep' at those pump brakes all the time."

"Don't you see I'm gettin' the engine fired up, you fellows?" demanded Pepper, striving to speak pacifically. "We'll soon couple her onto the pumps."

"To blazes with your engine!" was Atwell's comment. "We've struck work, me'n' my mates, an' that settles it."

Captain Latimer started aft.

"Hold on there!" called out Atwell. "Stay forward. We've got ye separate, an' we mean to keep ye so. Get back into the fo'c'stle, all three of you."

He drew a big revolver from his breast and covered the captain and his two companions. At the signal every man among the mutinous crew brought out some sort of a weapon. There were three or four pistols beside Atwell's.

"I'm out of it!" groaned Latimer. "My revolver is in my cabin."

"So is mine," said Thorne. "We'd better get under cover."

'Tonio had already dodged down the fore-castle steps again.

"Let 'em have the deck, cap'n," shouted Mr. Sessions. "We'll hold the cabin!"

He and Pepper made a dash for the forward companionway and dived below. At the same moment Thorne saw Miss Latimer at the galley door. Monckton was with her.

"There's the gal!" yelled Atwell, catching sight of the brig's second mate. "Drive her into the cabin. We want the galley."

But as he spoke the galley door was slammed to and fastened.

"She's got my revolver," exclaimed Captain Latimer, in delight. "They'll not get into that galley in a hurry. We'll starve 'em till they'll be glad to come to terms."

He and Thorne followed 'Tonio into the fore-castle. Thorne stopped to fasten the door. The slide in the deck was already closed and 'Tonio bolted it.

"They'll take off a hatch and get to the stores," suggested the passenger, in response to the captain's last remark.

"They won't if Sydney keeps her wits about her, an' I reckon she will," replied the captain, with pride. "The galley opens into the hold. She can keep any of those scamps from getting down by the hatches. The galley can be reached from the cabin, too. The mates can relieve her. They'll be all right, and if we had some sort of a shooting iron, *we'd* be all right, too."

Thorne thought of the strange cloud he had seen rolling up from the south, and wondered what would happen when *that* struck the brig. 'Tonio climbed upon the mess chest to light the swinging lamp; but Captain Latimer bade him let it alone.

"It's dark in here. If we light that thing those wretches can come along, pry aside that shutter, an' pick us off, if they're so minded."

Just then there was a fusillade of shots on deck. The captain groaned aloud. He did not fear for himself; but he trembled for his daughter's safety.

Suddenly Thorne heard a faint rap on the after bulkhead of the fore-castle. He stepped softly across the room and listened. The noise was repeated. Something creaked in the partition and to his vast surprise a narrow door swung slowly open.

"What the mischief's that?" shouted Captain Latimer, while 'Tonio uttered a howl of terror.

Somebody stood at the door with a lantern.

"Come this way," whispered the newcomer hoarsely. "You haven't a moment to lose. They are attacking the galley, sir."

It was Carter Monckton!

"How did you get here? What sort of deviltry is this?" gasped the captain.

He snatched the lantern from Monckton's grasp and examined the secret door.

"A neat job of joiner's work, indeed!" he exclaimed. "Hung on leather hinges. Nobody'd notice the crack in this dark corner. What do you know about this, cook?"

"I sw'ar to goodness, Massa Latimer, I nebber knowed nottin' erbout it," declared 'Tonio.

"This is some of Atwell's work," said the captain; "but how did *you* know about it?"

He turned upon Monckton with blazing eyes, and seized him roughly by the shoulder.

Thorne, although intensely interested in what was going on beside him, was also aware that something of serious import was taking place on deck. The firing had ceased. There were shouts of command and the tread of hurrying feet.

"Them debbles are lowerin' de boats an' leabin' us, Cap'n Latimer!" cried 'Tonio, rushing to the door.

As he spoke the brig seemed to strike some obstruction and she quivered from bow to stern.

"She's struck a reef!" exclaimed the captain, his face paling.

"No, no!" shouted Thorne, as 'Tonio flung open the door. "It's the storm. I saw it coming up."

The wind was shrieking like a pack of fiends through the writhing spars and rigging, and the sea all about the brig was whipped to foam. It was impossible to see half a cable's length beyond the rail.

"A typhoon!" roared Captain Latimer, as he sprang past the cook to the deck.

Atwell was yelling orders like a madman. Such sails as had been spread when the tempest struck had been torn from their bolts in a flash. But the ex mate was doing what he could to right the laboring brig. She lay over on her side till the sea ran over her rail. At the wheel stood Tom Shields and Jessop, hanging to the spokes for dear life.

Thorne slammed to the fore-castle door and followed the captain and 'Tonio across the staggering deck. The sailors who, a few minutes before, were carrying things with such a high hand, now clung to the shrouds with fear stricken faces. Latimer brushed the impotent Atwell aside. He seized a battered trumpet from beneath the quarter rail and shouted his orders through it.

Never did men spring more willingly to obey him. 'Tonio and Thorne laid hold of the ropes with the others. It was a stupendous battle, but at last, still staggering unsteadily under the force of the wind, the old Naida swung around and began to forge ahead before the gale. But she wallowed low in the heavy seas.

Thorne tried the well. As near as he could judge the water had gained nearly two feet. He ran and told the captain.

"Knock on the cabin door and tell the mates what's happened," he said. "Then, for God's sake, Mr. Thorne, take a look at my little girl. See what's happened to her."

Thorne hurried to the cabin and knocked on the door.

"Keep away from here, you villains!" he heard Mr. Sessions say. "I'm going to shoot."

"Don't do it!" cried Thorne quickly. "The captain's got control of the deck again. Come out."

Sessions and Pepper at once appeared, both fully armed. "Tonio was building another fire under the boiler of the engine, a wave which had boarded the brig having put the first out."

"You villains keep forward of the mast there," Captain Latimer commanded, addressing the cowed crew. "Don't one of you come aft unless you're told. Jessop, you and Shields remain at the wheel."

Thorne dashed below, and after arming himself in his stateroom, went forward to the galley. He found Sydney on guard with a big "bull dog" revolver and a loaded cane. She was pale, but calm.

"Is father hurt?" were her first words.

"Not at all," Thorne assured her. "He has control of the deck again. He feared something had happened to you."

"No, no," she said hastily. "I am all right. But I am worried for Mr. Monckton. He went into the hold saying that he thought he could reach you in the forecastle by climbing over the cargo. Have you seen him?"

"He is safe," replied Thorne shortly. "You had better go to your cabin now, I think, Miss Latimer. It is simply an armistice between the crew and the officers. Trouble may break out again at any moment."

"You forget that I am an officer, also," she said coldly.

She threw open the galley door and stepped out upon the deck. Thorne followed her. The worst of the tempest seemed to have passed, but the wind still blew strongly from the south. Aloft the rigging of the brig was a mass of broken and twisted cables. Half the lighter spars had been blown away, and the top of the foremast was broken short off.

The Naida labored fearfully in the waves, which were beginning to run very high. It needed little sea lore to assure Thorne that the craft was in a very bad way indeed. The sailors, all but Jessop and his chum, Tom Shields, had disappeared.

"Where is Mr. Monckton, father?" asked Sydney, the instant she reached his side.

"I don't know," returned the captain. "He was in the forecastle the last I saw of him. Has he come out, Mr. Thorne?"

"He's still with his friends," responded Thorne pointedly.

"What do you mean?" demanded Sydney wrathfully. "Has he been left to the mercy of those men?"

"I'll go forward and see what's the matter with him," volunteered Mr. Pepper.

Thorne and the captain looked at each other, but said nothing.

Ere this 'Tonio had got up steam in the engine and now, with Mr. Sessions' assistance, coupled on the pumps. Immediately a full stream of muddy water began to spit into the scuppers and run out of the hawse holes.

Mr. Pepper made his way forward and peered in at the forecastle skylight, from which the slide had been drawn back again. The lamp burned

dimly above the mess chest and the sailors were gathered about it, drinking. Atwell had brought out a plentiful supply of liquor from his secret hiding place. The treacherous scoundrel and Mockton were conversing earnestly together in one corner. The passenger appeared in no danger from the mutineers.

The amazed Pepper was about to go aft again when something looming up in the gloom ahead caught his eye. He looked again, shielding his eyes from the flying spray with his hand. The outlines of some vast object slowly developed. It was an enormous cliff towering high above the Naida's tallest spar!

He dashed back to the group near the quarter.

"Land! Land dead ahead!"

The cry paralyzed his hearers. Even Captain Latimer was helpless with the horror of it. He drew Sydney to him and they clung together on the break of the quarter while the great brig tore on her fateful course. Now above the howling gale, was borne to their ears the roar of the breakers. The outlines of the towering cliff stretched away on either hand. There was no break in the wall.

Thorne, clinging to the wire cable which guarded the ladder to the quarter, felt a numbness at his heart. This was the end, then. That awful sea would dash them in pieces against the rock. He saw the two mates shaking hands solemnly. 'Tonio was on his knees beside the hissing engine, praying with all the fervor of his emotional negro nature. And the sailors—those half drunken creatures in the forecabin—they would go into eternity unprepared—unwarned!

"They'll drown like rats in a trap!" was his thought.

He staggered forward, striving to reach the forecabin ere the brig struck. But he was too late. With a grinding crash the Naida was hurled forward upon the reef. A great wave broke over the stern and swept the deck from end to end.

"The boats—it's our only hope!" Thorne heard Captain Latimer shout. "Get ready the cutter, Mr. Sessions. I put Sydney in your charge."

He dashed into the cabin. A great wave followed him and flooded the place in a moment. The brig remained upright on the reef, having become wedged in her position. But every wave came in over her stern and her breaking up was a matter of but a few hours—perhaps a few minutes. The forecabin door had become jammed and Thorne heard the imprisoned men beating on it. He seized an iron pin from the mast and pried it open. The crazed sailors burst out and started aft with wild shrieks and curses.

Mr. Sessions stood at the cutter with a drawn revolver.

"Keep away!" he shouted warningly. "Take the long boat. I'll shoot the first man who comes aft."

Thorne saw the third mate stagger out of the galley laden with provisions. 'Tonio was unlashng a water cask amidships. Mr. Latimer was already crouching in the bottom of the cutter.

He struggled to the cabin and plunged down the stairs. Captain Latimer passed him with the logbook and cashbox in his hands. He shouted

something to Thorne as he went up. But the passenger kept on to his own quarters. If they were to be cast away upon a desert island the ship biscuit and salt meat Pepper had produced would not last long. Sydney could not subsist on such food. It was for her welfare he thought.

He seized a valise and tumbled a lot of his canned provisions into it. Then he rushed to her cabin and tore open the door. Everything was in confusion, but he found her workbox. He threw that into the valise also, and followed it with several small articles from the drawer of her dressing case. Then he started for the deck.

As he mounted the stairs a great wave met him and swept him back into the flooded cabin. But he clung to the valise and got upon his feet again. It was pitch dark in the place. It was almost as dark outside. As he reached the deck once more not a soul was in sight.

He staggered out upon the slippery planks and shouted hoarsely. No voice replied, but by his side there suddenly appeared the form of a man. Thorne recoiled and threw up his arm to shield his head from the blow he saw was about to fall. But the weapon descended and Thorne fell to the wave swept deck and lay prone, stunned and motionless !

CHAPTER XI.—CAST AWAY.

NIGHT had now shut down upon the wind beaten sea. Occasionally splashes of rain churned the waves to foam, or a vivid flash of lightning lit up the awful scene, while the thunder muttered overhead. The tropical typhoon had passed almost as quickly as it had risen ; but it had left in its wake a tempest of wind and rain, beneath which the stoutest bark might stagger. The *Naida*, caught between the huge jaws of the reef, reeled and shook beneath every blow the sea dealt her.

The masts had quickly wrenched themselves free. Their falling had driven the two boats, with their human freight, from the brig's side. And when they were pushed off and rowed desperately for the unknown coast, they left the unconscious form of Howard Thorne lying upon the deck. Every wave, as it rolled solemnly up behind, broke high above the quarter, and poured its tons upon tons of water inboard. The roaring, turbulent stream, confined for the moment between the yet unbroken bulwarks, swept everything movable forward. It rolled the inanimate body of Thorne over and over into the scuppers. But it could not break his hold upon the valise. He clung to that with a death grip.

The rough treatment, however, aroused him at last. The blow dealt by his unknown assailant had glanced from his arm to his head. The arm hung all but helpless by his side ; but it had saved his head. He struggled into a sitting posture between two waves. The roar of the breakers under the brig's bow deafened him ; the confusion of the elements was all about ; yet with returning consciousness came the activity of mind that belongs to the physically brave man.

The wreck would not hold together long under the terrific onslaught of the waves. If he would save himself he must work quickly. He clung to

the bulwarks while another sea passed and then ran across the deck to a heavy grating. With difficulty he loosed it from its lashings and dragged it from under the débris heaped upon it.

He first fastened his precious valise securely to this poor raft. Then he obtained a heavy axe from the cook's galley and an oar from the chest amidships. His injured arm pained him cruelly with every movement; but he set his teeth, seized the axe, and attacked the bulwarks. Every time a sea dropped over the stern he was nearly carried off his feet. He worked like a tiger when the deck was clear.

At length he accomplished his purpose. A wave, surging across the deck, carried away a great piece of the splintered rail. A breach was made into which he dragged his raft. With a rapid turn of the line he bound himself to the grating, and awaited the onslaught of the next wave.

It came, tumbling over the stern in a great, turbid flood, and rushed seething and foaming forward. The grating was caught up like a chip upon its bosom and with a roar and crash he was in the midst of the turmoil of waters over the reef. The sea boiled like a caldron beneath the brig's bows, but Thorne was carried safely beyond the rocks. Driven onward by the momentum of the wave, the raft neared the towering cliffs. Thorne raised himself upon his knees, wrenched the oar free, and tried to paddle with it; but the implement was torn from his weakened grasp and he could only fall upon his face and cling to the tossing raft.

Had the boats bearing his companions in distress reached the land? He saw no light upon the shore. He could distinguish a narrow line of shingle on which the billows broke with sullen roar; but only when the fitful lightning illuminated the scene could he see objects clearly.

He was being driven into an inlet, or cove. The shore lay upon his left—the frowning cliffs seemed towering all around him. He struggled madly to beach the grating. He even slid off into the sea and strove to touch bottom; but the water was too deep.

The current had grasped his frail support as though with a giant hand, and was hurling it upon the cliffs. He fought despairingly to push the grating to land. But it was impossible.

Then he let go his hold and struck out for the shore alone. Once he touched bottom, but a receding wave snatched him away again. The sea played with him as a cat might with her prey. He was tossed like a bit of flotsam from wave to wave.

Suddenly, as he was again swept shoreward, he saw a wind driven figure standing at the water's edge. He shouted and threw up his hand. There was an answering cry and, as he came nearer, the figure rushed in and caught him by the arm. The wave broke and ran far up the beach, leaving them sprawling in the boiling surf. Thorne struggled to his feet. He seized his companion by the hand. A vivid flash of lightning lit up the scene. It was Sydney Latimer!

"Quick!" she gasped. "Quick, before we are swept back again!"

But even as she spoke another billow broke around them. They went down before it. Once more they struggled up, still clinging to each other's

hand. Then the fearful undertow caught them in its embrace and they were dragged out and away — overwhelmed — smothered — drowned in the boiling surf!

Thorne's heart throbbed convulsively. His one thought was that she had sacrificed her life for him. He seized her around the body and fought his way to the surface. They were far out from the shore and not even his raft was in reach now.

"She has killed herself for me!" He cried the words aloud, and struck out like a mad man for the shore.

"Don't—I feel a current. Let it carry us," she murmured.

She knew more about the sea than he. He obeyed, still bearing her up with his uninjured arm. The foam streaked waters swept them on into the cut, but Thorne noticed that the waves no longer broke around them. The pounding of the surf was all behind.

Suddenly an eddy swung them toward the cliff on the right. He struck with cruel force against a rock; but he seized it and hung on grimly.

"Saved!" he cried.

Bearing the almost lifeless form of the girl upon his shoulder, he dragged himself out of the sea's reach. At last—miraculous as it seemed—he stood upon the land.

"Put me down. I can walk," said Sydney faintly.

He did so as another flash of the fitful lightning revealed their surroundings. The beach was narrow here and huge masses of fallen boulders lay at the foot of the cliff. Among those rocks must be some shelter — some rude cavity which might shield them from the gusts of rain which now and then swept in from the sea. Thorne looked at the girl pityingly. Her wet garments clung close to her figure, and the sea had torn some of them almost from her. His own clothing was in shreds, he had lost his hat, and his shoes he had kicked off before leaving the wreck. Sydney's hair had become loosened and hung down upon her shoulders, drenched and heavy.

"We must not stand here," said Thorne, taking her hand again. "Where are the others?"

"Father and the mates are somewhere near the place where I first saw you. They were looking for the long boat."

"Then the cutter got safely ashore?"

"Yes. Tonio and two of the sailors—Jessop and Shields—came with us. They feared the long boat had been wrecked and went to search along the shore."

"Well, we cannot cross this inlet again in the dark. We must find some shelter for the night."

"But father will think something has happened to me. He will believe that I am drowned."

"He'll find you're not, in the morning, and joy never kills, they say," responded Thorne, gaining courage now that he felt firm ground beneath his feet once more. "You risked your life to try to save me, Miss Latimer, and I'll make it my business to return you safely to your father. First, let us find some place out of the wind. You are shaking with the cold."

He led her along the shore. They had not gone ten yards when she stopped with a little cry.

"What's that? See it just below us there?"

Her eyes were sharper than his.

"It's part of the wreck," he replied. "The whole shore will be strewn with it before morning."

"Ah! but there is something bound to it, too." She trembled with more than the cold. "Is it a body? What became of Mr. Monckton?"

Thorne made no reply. He ran down to the water's edge.

"Glorious!" he shouted. "It's my raft. And here's the valise."

He pulled out his knife, cut it free, and came staggering back to her side with the drenched bag.

"Why do you burden yourself with that?" she asked.

"It's more precious than gold to us now," he replied.

"What do you mean?"

"You will see once we find our refuge," he said, trying to speak lightly.

They had not far to go before they came upon just such a place as Thorne had hoped to find. He had noticed the porous formation of the cliff and expected there were cavities of some size in it. An opening, before which the sea in some great gale had thrown up a barrier of sand and driftwood, yawned hospitably. Thorne hurried his companion toward it.

"Suppose there is something in there," Sydney suggested timidly,

"Then we will kill and eat it," declared the young man, laughing. But to reassure her he plunged ahead and entered the cavity alone.

She heard him shout to her from within.

"Come on!" he cried. "It is capital. The floor seems as dry as a bone, and the roof overhangs the mouth of the cave and shelters it from the sea."

She followed him hesitatingly.

"Wait—stay just where you are till I light a match," he said.

"A match, after having been in the sea?" demanded Sydney.

"A match can be carried in a water tight safe, my dear young lady. It is quite evident that you were never cast away before."

In a moment a pleasant little flame sprang up in one corner. Thorne ran for more wood. There was a great quantity just at the mouth of the cave—the débris from former wrecks. Soon a roaring fire lit up the whole place and its grateful warmth imparted new life to their chilled bodies.

"Isn't it glorious?" he cried, heaping on the fuel. "Still, we are in a semi tropical latitude, and when the sun shines it must be hot enough here."

"But you are prodigal with the fuel," she said.

"There is plenty—cords of it," he returned, and went out for more to prove his assertion.

Soon he came staggering back under the weight of a great plank which he threw down at one side.

"This is too big to burn, and I can't break it up," he remarked, "but it will make us a good seat."

"See—there is something on it," said Sydney.

"It's a plank from some ship's hull—why, that's a name!"

The paint was almost worn off, but some of the letters were still traceable.

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Thorne uttered a stifled exclamation.

"What is it, Mr. Thorne?" cried Sydney, startled by the look on his face.

"It is—it must be!" he murmured.

"*What* is it? What do you mean?"

"It is a part of the wreck of the Juan Fernandez, of San Francisco. My father sailed in that vessel from America. Jessop saw the wreck on the shore of the island where he was cast. *We are on that island now!*"

CHAPTER XII.—INTO THE TUNNEL'S MOUTH.

"THEN the island is inhabited!" exclaimed Sydney, after an instant's silence. "I am *so* glad."

"It *may* be inhabited," returned Thorne seriously. "Jessop said not; yet he could not explain the appearance of the man who rescued him otherwise. There was no other spot of land visible from this island, he declared."

"It is wonderful that we should fall upon it."

"It is coincidental, but not wonderful. We knew it was somewhere near us, and the typhoon drove us in the right direction; that is all. We should not have suspected its proximity had we sailed by in the night."

Thorne paced back and forth before the fire. He was excited. His face was flushed, his hands trembled.

"This *must* be the place," he repeated. "If there were *two* islands in these waters, some navigator would have found them ere this. And if this is the spot, my father is here! Miss Latimer, you cannot realize what that means to me."

"No, I cannot," she said sympathetically. "But I shall be glad for your sake if he *is* here."

"He must be!" exclaimed the young man, almost wildly.

"Don't disturb yourself so, Mr. Thorne," she said. "See; you must be wearied. I am almost exhausted myself, and faint, too."

"Ah, forgive me!" he cried. "This discovery has made me forget."

He brought the water soaked valise to the fire. Sydney had spread her tattered skirts before the blaze and was now comparatively dry. She watched him curiously as he opened the bag.

"I'm afraid I did not get the most important things, after all," he said deprecatingly. "The water had already flooded your cabin when I got there."

"My cabin?"

"Yes," he responded, with a smile. "I hope you will pardon the liberty. I ransacked your quarters for what I thought you might most need—the small articles, of course. I couldn't bring much in this bag."

She looked at him curiously, but said nothing.

"First of all, here is your workbox," he continued. "Just spread the things out here on the plank until they dry. See: here is a looking glass in the cover of the box—and it didn't break. I knew that even a lady in a *desert* land would want a looking glass. And here are a lot of little things. There are hairpins among them—a whole box. I know you'll thank me for them. And a comb. When your hair is dry you can do it up again. But here are the principal things." He took out the various tins of meats, soup, and fruit, and arranged them along the board. "What will you have for supper, Miss Latimer? Take your choice. Now that I am sure we are on the same island that Jessop was cast away upon, I feel relieved on the score of food supply, for he tells me there are fruit and vegetables here."

Then he looked up at her and found that she was crying.

"Why, what is it?" he exclaimed. "I have been rattling on here like a silly pated noodle, and of course you are worried half to death about your father and your own position. I'm a brute!"

"That is not it at all," she declared vehemently.

"What is it, then?"

"Have you done all this for me? And I believed—how *could* you be so thoughtful, Mr. Thorne?"

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed, driving his knife blade into the cover of a tin of soup. "Any man would have done the same."

"Even my father was not so thoughtful of my welfare," she said gravely. "Why did you do it?"

He looked up, with the knife still poised over the can. Their eyes met. The blood flew to Sydney's face, and Thorne dropped his gaze. But she did not pursue her inquiry further and there fell a little silence between them.

Thorne opened the can and set it down to heat. When it was ready he produced a little folding cup from his pocket, from which she drank her share. The soup seemed to revive her; but the strain of both mind and body which Thorne had experienced, began to tell on him. Again Sydney noticed the evident pain it caused him to use his left arm.

"You are hurt, Mr. Thorne," she said. "How did it happen?"

He hesitated before replying. He believed Monckton had been his assailant; yet it would only hurt her feelings if he told her so. Evidently Captain Latimer had not spoken to her of his own recently formed suspicions in regard to Carter Monckton's complicity in Atwell's plot.

"It was done just as I came up from the cabin with the valise," he said. "Something struck me on the arm—and on my head, too. But fortunately the arm saved the head. I was only knocked senseless for a little while. That is why I did not get to the cutter."

"And we thought you and Mr. Monckton were in the long boat," she exclaimed. "Just before we pushed off, father asked Atwell if the passengers were with him, and he said they were."

Thorne remained silent.

"Let me see your arm," she said. "It isn't broken, is it?"

"I guess not."

He removed his coat and pushed up the shirt sleeve beneath. The injured member was black from shoulder to elbow.

"Oh!" she cried, "it must pain you cruelly—and you never said a word!"

She seized the empty soup tin and ran out of the cave. In a moment she returned with a quantity of sea water, and set it over the fire to boil. Thorne leaned against the wall of the cave with his eyes closed. She got her scissors from the drenched workbox and ripped off the sleeve of his shirt. Then, when the water was hot, she used her own handkerchief to bathe his arm and finally bound it up tightly in the shirt sleeve.

"You must not try to use it for a long time," she said. "I wish I had some liniment to put on it."

"That's one of the things I forgot to put in the valise," he rejoined with a smile.

But he disobeyed her injunction, for he roused himself sufficiently to go outside and gather a quantity of drift wood and pile it up near at hand, that he might feed the fire during the night without being obliged to move far. He begged her to take some rest, for it was then past midnight. At first she refused; but at length tired nature asserted itself and she began to nod. They sat side by side upon the plank and soon her head dropped upon his shoulder. He put his good arm about her waist and eased her into a more comfortable position, and she slept on like a child.

He did not sleep himself. His injured arm prevented that. But he kept the fire burning brightly and by its light watched the color come and go in the face lying on his breast in its frame of tangled hair. Toward dawn the booming of the surf grew less harsh. The storm was subsiding and the troubled seas beat upon the rocks with a rhythmic sound like the lower notes of a great organ. Through the opening of the cave he could see the light in the sky grow stronger.

The fire died down to a bed of glowing coals. The fresh morning air swept into the cave, and Sydney awoke.

Thorne's face bending over her was the first thing her eyes rested upon. Perhaps she was not quite awake, for she smiled up at him and did not seek to move her head from his arm for a moment. Her eyes closed drowsily, and then she suddenly started up with a full realization of her position. The rich color mounted into her face in an instant; but her eyes expressed nothing but gratitude to him.

"Why, Mr. Thorne, I have slept!" she said.

"All night, Miss Latimer," he replied huskily. "See—the morning is breaking."

"And your poor arm—how is it?" she asked, as he assisted her to rise.

"Well, it is still with me," he returned, trying to smile.

They walked to the mouth of the cave. There was already light enough upon the sea for them to distinguish objects quite clearly. A long way out from the shore the waves broke in foam over the reef on which the Naida had been cast. But the brig had disappeared. Her wreckage strewed the beach and rolled in the surf as far as they could see in either direction.

Their eyes involuntarily sought each other's face. After the awful experience of the night they could never be the same to each other. If Thorne had disapproved of Sydney before, he had forgotten it; and if she had believed him narrow minded and dishonorable, she had seen her error. Thorne caught his breath with a little gasp, and turned away. He could not say what was in his heart now. It would be taking an unfair advantage of her and would place her in a position hard indeed to bear. He would wait.

Sydney was eager to set out at once to find her father and the others. But Thorne would not allow her to stir away from the cave until she had eaten heartily of the remaining can of soup.

"We will hide the rest of these provisions here," he said.

"But why not take them with us? They will be a great addition to the supplies we brought in the cutter."

"We will see how things are, first," he returned slowly.

They might find Atwell and the other mutinous sailors in control at the castaways' camp, and he knew that his scanty store of preserved food would be quickly disposed of by the reckless fellows, with no thought for her needs.

The sun had risen by the time they set out. The strange land on which they had been cast was revealed. As far as they could see on either hand the grayish cliffs rose unbroken, to a height of three or four hundred feet. Between the cliffs and the sea was a slightly sloping margin of shingle varying from a few yards to thirty or forty rods in width. The base of the cliff was strewn with broken boulders which had fallen from the summit in some upheaval of nature.

Thorne examined the formation of the rock by daylight with interest.

"Why, it is coral!" he said. "These great cliffs are all the same."

"But the coral insect only works below the sea level," objected Sydney.

"Very true; but the fact remains that this was once a vast coral reef, built perhaps millions of years ago, and now upheaved by some submarine eruption. Jessop told me these unscalable cliffs surround the center of the island in an unbroken chain. It may have been one of those wonders of coral formation—an atoll. When the floor of the ocean, on which it rested, was upheaved, this reef became a precipice."

They left the cave and walked back toward the inlet into which the current had swept them the night before. Thorne was alert for bits of valuable wreckage, and often ran down and rescued a cask or chest from the surf. The tide was almost at its full, and it was possible to drag these articles above high water mark.

The inlet was fully two cables' length in breadth at the sea, but it rapidly narrowed and was less than a quarter of a mile in length. The cliff skirted it quite closely. They saw that much of the débris from the wreck was being carried toward the head of the inlet by the current which set in from the sea.

Their progress was slow, but at length they drew near the end of the now narrow strait. The current still looked strong, and instead of there being a footway around the head of the inlet, the water lapped against the foot of the cliff itself. In the center was a low opening, and in this mysterious tunnel the water disappeared.

"We've got to wade across after all," said Thorne, in vexation. "But it's not very wide. That's one satisfaction."

"Nor very deep?"

"It doesn't look so from here. But I'll go across first and try it."

"Indeed you'll not," declared Sydney. "I am going with you, Mr. Thorne."

So he said no more, but prepared to breast the flood. The water looked black and cold; but it was not deep near shore, so they waded boldly in. Sydney hardly came up to his shoulder and he was waist deep before Thorne began to feel the force of the current against his limbs.

"It—it *is* deep," she said, with a gasp.

"Never mind. Stick close to me," he returned reassuringly. "I can keep my footing in a good deal deeper water than this."

He drew her closer to him and encircled her waist with his arm. Thus, bearing her above the flood, he pressed on. The rocks were slippery beneath his feet; the treacherous undertow tugged at his limbs; but he moved on.

They had almost reached the center of the stream when a little cry from Sydney startled him. He turned his gaze upon the bank before them. A man stood there, staring at them with blazing eyes, and with pale, passion convulsed face.

"It is Mr. Monckton—he is alive!" exclaimed Sydney.

But her cry, which had drawn Thorne's gaze momentarily from the current, was fateful. His next step was unsteady. The rock slipped, and in a breath they were floundering in the water. Thorne struggled desperately to regain his foothold and quickly got his head above the surface again. Sydney was choking with the salt water, but otherwise uninjured.

To his horror, however, he could not recover his balance on the slippery rocks. Somehow he had stepped beyond his depth and the current was dragging him and his precious burden toward the yawning mouth of the tunnel.

He turned his agonized face imploringly to the shore.

"Help! Quick, if you would save us!" he gasped.

Monckton heard him. A sort of shudder went through his frame, but he did not move.

"For God's sake!" shrieked Thorne, feeling his strength deserting him and the current tightening its hold. "If you are a man, save her!"

Then Monckton moved. He staggered down to the margin of the current. But Thorne and his burden had already swept by the spot.

"Never mind me—save her!" was his despairing cry.

Monckton ran along the rocky edge of the torrent. Sydney stretched out her arms to him and then, caught by some fitful eddy, she was snatched away from the shore. They both whirled around in the center of the current for an instant and then shot downward into the tunnel. Thorne caught at the ragged rocks past which they were swept. His hand was torn, his arm wrenched.

Then the current bore them in toward the side of the tunnel. He seized a point of rock and drew his body half out upon it. But the water, as though

fearful of losing all its prey, put forth added effort and Sydney was torn from his weakened grasp. He struggled out upon the rock and strove to pierce the blackness with his eyes, uttering shout after shout of despair. But only the mournful echo of his own voice came back to him through the awful gloom.

CHAPTER XIII.—FOES IN ADVERSITY.

IN a hollow between two heaps of sheltering rock a little fire of driftwood was burning. These rocks and the towering gray cliff sheltered the place on three sides. Before the seaward side two boats were drawn up on the sand—the cutter and long boat of the *Naida*.

There were two groups of men near the fire. The larger consisted of Atwell and nine of the sailors. At the other side of the blaze an old, gray haired man sat upon the ground, his elbows on his knees, his face resting in his hands. It was Captain Latimer, and with him was Mr. Sessions, Mr. Pepper, and the mulatto cook, 'Tonio.

I said there were two groups. There were three, for Jessop and Tom Shields occupied a position between the other two. They were still "neutral," and claimed fellowship with both—or neither. The entire party had just breakfasted from the stores that had been brought in the cutter. The sailors were too terror stricken to think of food when they left the brig.

"See here, sir," Pepper was saying, with his hand on the captain's shoulder, "she can't have been drowned. She's just got lost along the shore here. 'Tonio and I'll go up the coast an' see if she's beyond that inlet."

"It's no use, Pepper," responded the old man sorrowfully. "I've been tramping these sands an' callin' on her all night. She'd ha' heard me if she had been above board."

"Mebbe she's found Mr. Thorne, an' they're together somewhere."

But Captain Latimer shook his head.

"Poor Thorne," he said. "He never got away from the brig. That villain Atwell told me he was in the long boat, an' I believed him. I might ha' known he'd get square with the poor lad if he once got the chance. I saw Thorne in the cabin as I was comin' out and I don't believe he ever got on deck again."

"Well, I won't believe either he or Miss Sydney's gone below till I find their bodies on the shore yonder," declared Pepper. "Where's Monckton?"

"He's been out searching for them, too, 'most all night," replied the captain.

"A lot he cares about finding Thorne," muttered Sessions in the third mate's ear. "I guess he's a good deal cut up about the girl, though."

"Come on, 'Tonio, let's we see if we can cross that inlet," suggested Pepper.

"You'd better wait a bit, sir," said Jessop, looking up.

"How's that?"

"You can't cross that inlet while the tide's runnin' like a millrace. The only time when it's safe to do it is when she's just on the turn."

"You're sure this is the island you was wrecked on before?" demanded Sessions.

"No doubt of it, sir."

"Well, we didn't have to hunt far to find it," remarked the mate. "You'd better hear to Jessop, Pepper."

At that moment another man approached along the sand. It was Monckton, his face pallid, his hands shaking as though with the palsy.

"What's the good word?" asked Pepper.

Monckton shook his head, crossed to the opposite side of the fire, and sat down silently. Atwell, who had been looking at him curiously, got up and offered him his flask. The other clutched it and drank eagerly.

"D'ye see that?" said Sessions, in a low tone. "Those rascals have got liquor. As long as it lasts we'll have trouble with 'em."

"Then the sooner they get rid of it the better," growled Pepper.

"I thauk the Lord there was none of the stuff in the brig's cargo," went on Sessions, "so they won't be able to broach a cask here on the shore and get howling drunk as I've seen a crew do under similar circumstances."

"We ought to get to work on some of this stuff that's floating in, though," whispered Pepper. "We may be thankful for it. We must do *something* to rouse the old man's interest in things, or he'll go quite off his chump."

Just then Jessop and Shields rose and moved away from the fire.

"Where are you going, men?" demanded Sessions.

"We're after some green stuff—vegetables, sir," replied Jessop. "I know where some grows not more'n a mile or two from here. The tide 'll be at the full in a bit an' we can cross the inlet. We'll keep our eyes peeled for the second mate, if so be she's about."

"Then 'Toniio and I'll go to the west'ard," said Pepper. "She may have passed us in the dark."

Captain Latimer groaned, but did not show his interest in conversation otherwise.

"While they're gone, men, let's get some of these casks and things ashore," proposed Sessions cheerily, addressing the remaining sailors. "We might as well look the matter fairly in the face. The first thing is to save the stuff. How to get away from the place will come later."

The men looked at Atwell and said nothing. He turned on the mate a face crimsoned by his excessive potations.

"What's the matter with *you*?" he demanded in his ugly way. "D'ye think we're aboard ship again? Me'n' my mates don't take no orders from the like of you on shore here."

Sessions' temper blazed out at once.

"You drunken fool!" he exclaimed. "Can't you see what's best for all of us?"

"If you want to drag them casks ashore, you can. We'll live on vegetables an' fruit and be glad of the chance. Jessop says there's plenty of such here."

"And do you expect to stay here forever?" demanded the mate.

"Till we get ready to leave."

"And how will you get to any inhabited island?"

"In the long boat. If Jessop an' another fellow could make the trip to Aukland in the same sort of a craft, I reckon we can get to the Marquesas. That ain't so far."

"But this whole party couldn't sail there in the long boat," gasped Sessions.

"Did anybody say they could?" demanded Atwell, with a cruel laugh.

"There's room enough for *us*. You fellows can do as you durn please."

"You cowardly villain!" cried Sessions.

He took a step toward the fellow as though intending to strike him; but at that instant Jessop and Shields reappeared from the direction of the inlet. And between them they bore a figure, the sight of which brought a cry of amazement from all. Perhaps Sam Atwell himself betrayed the most emotion. He shrank back with a cry of fear, his face pale, his jaw hanging. Monckton arose slowly to his feet, his bloodshot eyes fixed upon the face he had never expected to see again.

It was Thorne. His clothing was torn to shreds. He was without coat, or hat, or shoes. His face was like death and he reeled between the two sailors like a drunken man. But the instant he saw Monckton he wrenched himself free and staggered toward him.

"You fiend! you devil!" he cried, the words rasping from his parched throat. "*Her blood is upon your head!*"

He stretched out his hand to seize the terror stricken Monckton, and fell senseless at his feet.

"It's Mr. Thorne!" gasped Pepper.

"What does it mean? Where did you find him, men?" asked Sessions, dropping upon his knees beside the senseless man.

"He was just crawling out of that tunnel yonder, where the sea makes in," replied Jessop.

"Out of the tunnel!" replied the mate.

"Aye, aye, sir. I'd never thought mortal man would ha' got out of it, once the current got a grip on him," said the sailor.

"But how came he there? What does it all mean?"

"There's somebody here who knows about it," interposed Pepper, pointing to the pallid Monckton.

"Mr. Monckton!" cried the mate, "what do *you* know about it, sir?"

Monckton wet his parched lips with his tongue and tried to speak. But the words would not come.

"Come, sir," commanded Sessions, looking at him sternly, "tell us what you know about this. Mr. Thorne intimated that you were connected with the mystery."

"I—I don't know what he means," said Monckton, in a husky voice.

"Is he dead?" asked Pepper, turning to the mate.

"No, no! His heart beats. But it's a case of absolute exhaustion."

"Atwell," exclaimed Pepper, "let me have that flask you're being so free with."

The sailor, not yet recovered from his terror at the appearance of Thorne, did as he was bid. The third mate wet the lips of the insensible man with the stuff and forced a little between his teeth. Then he coolly placed the flask in his own pocket.

"I'll take charge of this," he said. "You'll be a sight better off without it, Atwell."

Thorne began to show signs of returning consciousness. He stirred and groaned feebly. After a moment his eyes opened and he stared wildly about.

"Save her—for God's sake save her! Never mind me," he muttered.

Captain Latimer, who had sat silent through it all, suddenly pressed forward.

"Have you seen Sydney? Do you know anything about her?" he asked. Thorne gazed at him with dawning intelligence.

"Speak, man!" begged the anxious father. "What has become of her?"

"Dead! dead!" groaned Thorne.

"Dead!"

"Aye, *dead!*" repeated Thorne, "and by that villain's hand!"

He raised his trembling finger and pointed to the fear stricken Monckton.

The latter fell back a step. Pepper thought he was trying to escape, and seized him by the shoulder.

"Hold on, my hearty!" he exclaimed. "You'd better stay and hear this out."

"It's a damnable lie!" cried Monckton, finding his voice. "The man's beside himself."

"It is God's truth," gasped Thorne.

"How did it happen?" demanded Sessions.

"We were crossing the inlet——"

"Who were?"

"Miss Latimer and I."

"But how came she with you?"

"Last night—when I was driven ashore—she saw me and tried to help me to land. The undertow seized us both and carried us into the inlet. We made a landing on the other side."

Thorne spoke with difficulty, but his words were understood by all.

"This morning we started to cross the inlet to join you. We were about half way over when she saw *him* standing on the shore."

Again Thorne raised his arm and pointed at Monckton.

"I looked when she cried out, and missed my footing. We were both dragged under by the current. I shouted to him to help us, *and he stood still on the bank and watched us fighting for our lives!*"

Thorne was panting for breath. His eyes blazed. He struggled up upon his elbow.

"As God is my witness, I'll kill him!" he cried, shaking his clenched hand at the cowering man. "Once I get my strength back this island will not be large enough to hold both him and me. I swear it!"

"Tell us the rest, sir," said Latimer hoarsely.

"There's naught else to tell," groaned Thorne, sinking back upon Ses-

sions' arm. "The tide sets in toward that tunnel like a millrace. He could have saved us both had he tried. He could have saved *her*, any way. But he let us go by him, and when he did move it was too late. We were swept into the tunnel. I caught at a rock to stay us; but she was snatched away from me and—that's all."

He suddenly dropped his face upon his arm amid a tempest of hard, dry sobs. His emotion shook his whole body. The mates turned their heads away and the sailors were dumb. But not so Captain Latimer.

He rose to his full height, his eyes fixed upon Monckton. His face was gray and his hands worked convulsively.

"You murderer!" he hissed. "You don't deny this—your guilt is only too plainly written on your face."

Monckton strove to speak but could not.

"Thorne has spoken the truth—you have killed her!" His voice rose to a shriek. "She was all I had—my daughter!" A little fleck of foam appeared on his lip. He stretched out his hands, clutching the air convulsively. "A father's curse upon you!" he shrieked, and plunged forward a step toward the miserable Monckton. "Pray—pray, you craven!—for by the living God I'm going to kill you!"

Monckton was paralyzed—fear stricken. He did not move as the crazed old man reached him. Those awful, talon-like fingers closed upon his throat. They swayed together an instant and then, sharply breaking the awed hush which had fallen on the group, came the crack of a pistol. Latimer reeled and went down, the blood flowing from his breast, and Monckton fell across his inert body.

CHAPTER XIV.—ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY.

SESSIONS sprang forward and pulled the almost senseless Monckton off the captain's body. But Pepper drew his revolver and cocked it.

"Hold there?" sang out Atwell, from the other side of the fire. "I've got the drop on you, Pepper."

The treacherous sailor's voice was harsh and discordant, but there was no tremble to it now. He had recovered his self possession, and murder looked out of his bloodshot eyes.

"I had an old score to settle with Latimer, but I don't care what becomes of you an' the mate. Just drop your guns—both of you—and get back to 'Tonio yonder."

There was nothing for the two officers to do but obey. It would have been suicidal to show fight, for Atwell was backed by all the sailors but Jessop and Shields, and four of them had pistols. They laid down their weapons and fell back to where the cowering mulatto knelt upon the sand. At Atwell's command one of the sailors gathered up the pistols, even removing the one strapped about the captain's waist.

"Come along with us, Mr. Monckton," said Atwell. "We'll see that you're not harmed. We're your friends."

Monckton, still dazed and silent, crossed over to the mutineers.

"An' where do *you* go?" demanded Atwell, scowling at Jessop and his chum.

The two neutral sailors stepped forward and helped Thorne to his feet.

"Seein' as the Naida's a wreck, an' things are generally changed," said Jessop slowly, "Tom and me have signed articles with Mr. Thorne here."

Amid the silence of both parties they led him up the beach, and were quickly out of sight.

Atwell gave a command in a low voice to his followers. They prepared at once to launch the long boat. They took the water cask and provisions out of the cutter and placed them in their craft. Then seizing an axe Atwell chopped a great hole in the cutter's bottom.

"There, my hearties," he said, with an evil smile, "I guess you'll stay here for one while. We'll bid you good-by—for the present."

He motioned Monckton into the long boat which his men had already run down into the surf, and followed himself. The next moment they pushed off, and the little party of officers and the cook were deserted on the shore.

Sessions made another examination of the wounded captain.

"He isn't dead yet," he assured his companions. "The bullet took an upward course and lies under the skin on top of the shoulder. Lend me your knife, Pepper, and I'll cut it out."

"Tonio went for water and Sessions probed and cleansed the wound with his finger.

"It hasn't touched the lung," he said. "The old man's hard hit all round, but I reckon he'll come out of it."

"Yes, but how will *we* come out of it?" queried Pepper gloomily.

"We shan't starve nor freeze," returned the first officer. "What we must do is to join forces with Thorne and his party."

But they did nothing toward this that day. They found a more sheltered place among the boulders and removed the captain to it. The compass and instruments which were in the locker of the small boat were also taken to their new camp. Pepper and the cook rescued a number of valuable articles from the wreck, including casks of bread and meat, and a small chest of carpenters' tools.

They saw Jessop and Shields occupied in the same work on the other side of the inlet. But Atwell and his party had disappeared with their boat around the western point of the island.

The next morning, however, Tom Shields made his appearance at the officers' camp.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Sessions, who hardly knew whether to look upon the sailor as a friend or an enemy.

"Mr. Thorne sends to know 'ow the cap'n is, sir," replied Tom, with a pull at his forelock.

"He's not badly hurt," said Sessions, "an' is doing as well as can be expected."

"Well, sir," went on the sailor, "Mr. Thorne was sayin' as 'ow you was welcome to bring 'im up to our place an' come yourselves. We've found a nice, light, dry cave an' made it comfortable."

"So Mr. Thorne says that, does he?" asked Sessions curiously. "And what do you and Jessop say?"

"Why, sir," replied the Englishman awkwardly, "as we looks at hit, we ain't bound no longer by our harticles. Mr. Thorne, 'e's ahired of us both, an' wot 'e says goes."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Then I reckon we'll accept the offer, eh, Pepper?"

"That's my mind," responded the third mate. "Thorne's got as much to fear from Atwell and his crew as we have. We'd best join forces, say I."

They laid Captain Latimer upon a piece of sail cloth that had been in the cutter and carried him to the cave where Thorne and his two companions had established themselves. It was right beside the tunnel at the head of the inlet, and the entrance could be easily guarded.

Thorne was yet too stiff and lame to do any work himself; but under his supervision the two sailors had performed wonders. The rope he had used to lash himself to the raft on the night of the wreck, and which he had had the forethought to bring ashore when he found his valise, was rigged across the treacherous inlet. With this life line it was an easy matter to cross.

The two sailors had brought across the inlet a great quantity of the wreckage Thorne had saved the morning before, and the cave was partially filled with bales, casks, and boxes. Part of the Naida's cargo had been sewing machines and farming tools. The first named were of no use to them, of course; but some of the latter had been cast up by the sea, and Thorne had carefully saved them. Casks of meat and bread from the brig's stores were piled in the cave, too; and Jessop had found time to gather some cocoanuts from a grove up the coast and cut off the tops of several cabbage palms. They were well supplied with food.

"If we only had arms and ammunition," sighed Pepper, after he and Tonio had brought up the articles they had saved from the wreck. "If we only had *them*, we'd be in first rate circumstances—for castaways. If I had a good Marlin repeater—or a Winchester—I'd agree to settle with Atwell and his whole gang, if they attack us."

"As it is, we haven't a blessed thing to defend ourselves with," said Sessions gloomily.

"Not quite," interposed Thorne. He brought out from the cave his revolver, newly cleaned and oiled. Every chamber was loaded. "I've got a valise hidden up the coast yonder," he added, "and among other things in it are two or three boxes of cartridges. I'll go after them before long."

But it was several days before he felt well enough to undertake the jaunt. Meanwhile an off shore gale had blown almost every vestige of the wreck away from the island. They could rescue no more of the brig's cargo. But they had already got together a great pile of broken spars and plank and cordage on the shore, beside the supplies in the cave.

Nothing had been seen or heard of Atwell and his friends, and they hoped the long boat had left the island and been blown so far away by the storm that the mutineers would not land again. Thorne talked with Jessop about making a journey of exploration around the island and of trying, if possible, to scale the cliff.

"It can't be done, sir," the sailor declared. "I tried that when I was here before. A goat couldn't get up them rocks."

"But I believe there is something behind the cliffs," Thorne said. "I don't know whether it's a basin of water, connected with the ocean by this inlet, or whether it's land. There's *something* there. And then, from the top of the cliff we'd have a better chance of seeing land, if there's any near; or ships if they sailed by."

However, he had to admit that so far as could be seen on this side of the island, there was no possible path to the summit of the cliff.

They had occupied the cave near the inlet a week before Thorne felt strong enough to go for the valise he had hidden where Sydney and he had stayed the night of the wreck. He went alone, found the bag, and carried it back to the inlet. As he started to cross he saw that the tide had just turned and was now making strongly into the tunnel. At low water, as now, the entrance to the mysterious passage was high enough for a good sized boat to get through. Had the cutter been whole he would have been tempted to explore the place.

Stepping out upon the further bank he noticed, for the first time, that the plateau in front of the cave was deserted. Neither the officers of the *Naida*, the cook, nor the two sailors, were in sight. Captain Latimer had not moved from his bed since being brought to it, and he was never left alone. But as Thorne hastened up the bank of the inlet he heard loud voices and a sudden fusillade of pistol shots from the direction of the beach. Startled by the sounds, he sprang upon a boulder and strove to gain a view of the shore. All he could see was a crowd of men struggling, nearly a quarter of a mile away, and who were friends and who enemies he could not tell.

"Look out for yourself, Thorne!" he heard Pepper shout. "These fiends have got the best of us."

There was a hoarse cry from Atwell, and Thorne saw the mutineer and several of his gang running up the incline toward him.

"Look out for the cap'n!" Sessions commanded.

Thorne fired a shot at the mutineers, checking their advance, and darted back to the entrance of the cavern. The opening was so narrow that but one of the attacking party could approach at a time. With his revolver, he was practically master of the situation.

As he entered he glanced in the direction of the captain's bed. It was empty, nor was the wounded man anywhere in the cave. While trying to understand this strange disappearance, he heard a step outside. He ran to the mouth of the cavern. Atwell was coming stealthily up the path. Thorne cocked his revolver instantly, but the mutineer saw him.

"Hold on, sir!" he shouted, holding up his hand. "I ain't armed. I'm here for a talk."

"Well, talk quick."

"Well, sir, me an' my mates have been livin' on t'other side of the island, an' we didn't have no chance to save any of the brig's stores. We want our share of them stores in the cave and the compass an' sextant that was in the locker of the cutter."

"What for?"

"Why, we're minded to provision our boat well and find our way to the Marquesas. I'm a good navigator."

"And leave us to our fate?"

"That isn't the way to look at it," responded Atwell pacifically. "The whole crowd of us couldn't go in that long boat, and the cutter is too small even if it wasn't smashed. There isn't any use expecting a ship to sail by this island. It's too far out o' the line of trade. But when we get to the Marquesas we'll send a boat back for you."

"Do you suppose we'd trust to your promise to send us help?" demanded Thorne.

"I don't see but what you'll have to," replied Atwell surlily.

"I guess I'll keep the instruments and stores," said Thorne. "You'll not leave this island unless we all go."

"You think so, do you?" cried Atwell in anger. "I've got the rest of your crowd—all but old Latimer—an' I'll shoot every one of them!"

"If you touch one of them you'll suffer for it," replied Thorne. "I was counted something of a pistol shot in Boston. I've got plenty of ammunition and I'll pick you off, one by one, if you harm those men."

"Maledictions on you!" roared Atwell. "I ought to have finished you when I had the chance. I thought I did, before I left the brig."

Thorne started.

"So it was you who assaulted me, eh?" he asked. "And I have been laying it to my friend Monckton."

"Monckton!" exclaimed Atwell, in disgust. "He hasn't got enough sand to kill a mosquito. Don't you forget that I am the chap who tried to do you. And the next time I'll be successful—you an' the cap'n both."

"Now, I've heard enough," said Thorne sharply. "You get back out of range or your gang of cut throats will be without a leader."

"See here—you talk to Latimer about it, an' see what he says," said Atwell, trying to swallow his chagrin.

"I can't."

"You *can't*?"

"No. He's not here."

"You're lying, I believe!" declared Atwell.

"You're welcome to your belief. He's disappeared. I'm here alone. I'm a desperate man—I don't care much whether I live or die. You fellows won't get in here while I can keep you out. Now hustle along."

Atwell slunk slowly out of sight. Thorne was tempted to put a bullet through him as he went. He knew that the mutineer would not have hesitated at such an act himself; but Thorne was handicapped by preconceived ideas of honor. That night he lay at the entrance of the cave, his weapon cocked and ready to his hand. He was determined that no one should enter the place excepting over his dead body. He dared not sleep—at least, not in the night. How long he could hold out against his besiegers he did not know. The condition of his friends in Atwell's hands worried him, too. But, most of all, he feared for Captain Latimer's safety.

In the morning he discovered that the mutineers had encamped within sight of the mouth of the cave. But his friends were not with them. Surprised at this he thoughtlessly stepped outside, the better to see the camp. Instantly a man appeared on either hand and covered him with a pistol. He fired at one—without effect—and the other sprang forward and knocked his revolver from his hand. His capture was then an easy matter, although he fought with all his strength.

"I really thought you'd give us more of a tussle," said Atwell jeeringly, when the struggle was over and the young man lay panting and bound upon the rocky plateau.

Thorne was silent. The siege had ended very tamely indeed.

"I meant to get you though, before long," Atwell went on. "Therefore I sent your friends to the other side of the island last evening. It might hurt their feelings to view a little incident which I propose shall take place before we leave this blooming island."

His men rolled out such stores as he directed. The long boat was brought into the inlet and moored near by. The instruments, Captain Latimer's cash box, and the provisions were put aboard. Thorne's pockets were searched and his purse taken. There was not much money in it, but in a belt around his waist was a draft for five thousand dollars.

"I believe I can make this useful," said the villain, and he explained its value to his companions. "But it's only payable at Auckland," he added. "I reckon we'd better try for that after we get to the Marquesas."

When the boat was made ready for departure the mutineers had an earnest discussion. Finally Atwell carried his point, whatever it was, and came over to Thorne.

"There's just two things I want to do before bidding good by to this island," he said, cutting the prisoner's ankle lashings. "One is, that I want to see that old buzzard, Latimer. But I'm afraid I'll have to go without that pleasure. Still, I winged him and he may not get over it. The other thing is to *put you up here for a target!*" The man's eyes blazed wickedly and his teeth gleamed beneath his heavy beard like a wolf's. "Sam Atwell never forgets an injury. I ain't forgot the time you knocked me down, back there in Rivermouth, all for that girl—blast her eyes! I'm glad she's goue down yonder," and he pointed to the tunnel below them, "and I'm going to send you after her. Letting her drown was the only decent thing that white livered Monckton done. I ain't forgot that blow, I say," he continued, advancing his wicked face and thrusting it into Thorne's own. "I can feel it now—an' I shall feel it till I wipe it out by wiping you out!"

He said something to his men. Two of them stepped forward and dragged Thorne to his feet. He scarcely realized what they were doing. He was led to the edge of the bank, turned with his back to the water, and a bandage was tied over his eyes. He then heard them move away, and the click of revolvers followed.

"If you've got anything to say, speak up," said Atwell harshly.

"Untie my hands," said Thorne.

"What's that for? Think you can get away? Well, do it for him, Con."

Thorne felt the yarn which held his wrists part. He shook the cords from him and tore the bandage from his eyes.

He looked on sky and sea—on the gray shingle and the towering bluffs. The tide had just turned and in the inlet behind him the water was rushing back into the tunnel. It would soon sweep his bullet riddled body into the darkness.

He faced his murderers dully. Some of the faces revealed hesitation—some indifference. But one there was that showed murder in every line. Some bullets might fly wild when the word came to fire, but Atwell would reach its mark unerringly.

Thorne moistened his lips and spoke. "I am ready," he said.

But at the very moment his lips formed the words there was the splash of oars behind him in the inlet—an exclamation in a strange tongue—a hastily uttered order. Thorne did not turn. He scarcely heard the interruption. He gained his knowledge of it from the sudden change in the faces before him.

"Drop those weapons!" a voice shouted from the inlet.

Then Thorne looked around. A large boat, manned by brawny, bare armed men dressed in white, had just come out of the tunnel. The men were brown—the chocolate brown peculiar to the South Pacific islander. Some of them brandished long oars; but fully half a dozen had rifles.

In the bow stood the owner of the voice that had uttered the order—a tall, commanding man—a white man—with flowing gray hair and beard. And beside him was a woman. Thorne looked on in the same dazed fashion, as the man and his armed associates leaped ashore.

"Almost a murder, eh?" said the leader sternly. Then he repeated an order to his men and they disarmed the mutineers.

"And who are *you*, sir?" he asked, approaching Thorne.

The woman had disembarked, too, and was by his side. Thorne's gaze went beyond his interrogator and rested on her face. And it was the face of Sydney Latimer.

"This is he," she said to her companion. Then she stepped forward and took Thorne's hand. "Don't you know me, Mr. Thorne—Howard?" she asked, looking up at him with tear blinded eyes. "This is your father—Edgar Thorne. I have told him about you."

The reprieved man reeled and would have fallen had the other not caught him in his arms.

CHAPTER XV.—A CLIFF ENCIRCLED PARADISE.

SUDDENLY Thorne awoke and opened his eyes. He was lying in a grass hammock in the shade of a thatched veranda. A pleasant, undulating country, with smooth green meadows checked off with little garden patches, was stretched out before him. In each garden plot was a low hut with a conical thatched roof. He did not know where he was. He was in that blissful state between waking and sleeping where a man cares neither where he is nor what has happened; when wonders cease to amaze and mysteries to perplex.

A slight, graceful figure in a flowing white garment sat by his side. One pretty hand rested on the hammock and swayed it back and forth; the other upheld the face which was turned from him. It did not seem strange that Sydney Latimer should be alive and beside him in the midst of these unfamiliar scenes. He put out his fingers, surprised to find even such a slight effort wearying, and laid them upon the hand on the hammock.

Sydney sprang to her feet and bent above him, her dark eyes shining like stars. He put his other hand upon her shoulder, and slight though his strength was, drew her nearer. Their lips met. Then she stood upright, shook the hair back from her face and said:

"Do you know me, Howard?"

That was a ridiculous question for a girl to ask a man just after she had kissed him! Thorne told her so afterward; but then he was content to lie there and listen to what she had to say.

"You don't know where you are, do you?" she went on. "You have been sick a week—out of your senses, too, you poor boy, most of the time. At first you were going over and over in your mind that awful experience we had together the night of the wreck, and our battle with the tide when we were swept into the tunnel. Oh, you told a lot I had never suspected before."

She shook her finger at him roguishly.

"Luckily there was nobody but my father and your father to hear it."

"My father—your father?" repeated Thorne.

"Yes; don't talk and I will tell you. This is the interior of the island. Would you have guessed it? Your father says it was an atoll before it was upheaved. The cliffs surround it on all sides, only in here they are only about fifty feet high and very easily scaled. I have been up there and looked over the whole island. This inner basin contains only five or six square miles, but there are nearly a thousand people living here. They almost worship your father.

"Isn't it wonderful? He was wrecked here twenty years ago. His companions died. These natives, who have nothing to do with any of the inhabitants of the other Pacific islands, found him. They have been here for centuries; that is, I mean their ancestors were. The plain is drained through the crevasses in the coral cliff, and when they have occasion to enter or leave this plain they go in canoes through the tunnel at low water. Well, they welcomed your father to their villages and he has been here all the time, excepting the few months he was absent on his trip with Jessop to Auckland. He returned from that, determined never to leave again."

"But you——" began Thorne.

"Wait. I will tell you. I was carried right through the tunnel, which is about fifty yards long, and out into the light again. On this side there is a deep cut or gully that has been carved out by the water running down to the sea level for so many ages. Under your father's direction that ravine was enlarged and the natives have kept their canoes there, and the old long boat of the Juan Fernandez, and a larger boat they have recently built. I was cast ashore and they found me. That was the first they had known of the wreck of the Naida.

"Well, it was a long time before I could tell your father about our misfortune. Then he was not willing to go outside in broad daylight. He did not want all those sailors in here. When we finally discovered how matters stood and that father was shot, Mr. Thorne went out and brought him in. You were all away from the cave at the time. I saw the fight between the mates and Atwell from the top of the cliff, and saw you driven into the cave. But father told us an armed man could hold the cave a week, so Mr. Thorne did not go back, fearing that in the dark you might mistake him for an enemy. I went with him the next morning, and we arrived just in time to save you from Atwell."

"And what has become of the scoundrel and his men?"

"Your father disarmed them and took the long boat away from them. Then he carried them to another part of the island—outside of the cliffs, of course—and built them a hut, gave them seeds and the gardening tools you saved from the wreck, and a chance to earn their livelihood. Father and I have told him all about your coming from America to find him, and he has agreed to go back with us—for a year. When he returns he will take steps to send Atwell and the others back to their homes. He is getting ready the new vessel—it is really a nice little schooner—to take us to Valparaiso. The mates and Jessop and Shields will man it."

"And—and Monckton?"

"He is going with us," she said gravely. "He is repentant, having had a fearful experience with that company of cut throats. I'm sorry to say that my father is still so bitter against him that he wants him left behind with Atwell; but I begged Mr. Thorne, and he will take him to Valparaiso. You don't mind, do you?"

"Not *now*!" replied Thorne, with energy, clasping her hand again.

* * * * *

Less than a month later, at the end of the short rainy season, the roomy schooner, built by Edgar Thorne and his native helpers, and rigged by the mates of the Naida and Jessop and Shields, set sail from the island which for twenty years had been Thorne's home. And it would always be his home. He had little interest beyond the confines of its towering coral cliffs.

"I go only to please you, my son," he said, standing by Howard's side and gazing regretfully at the lone isle, "and to assure Undercliff of my forgiveness. My heart is here, where the harsh world cannot reach it."

Having scarcely experienced a day of unpleasant weather, the little vessel arrived at Valparaiso. Monckton left them, sailing at once in a tramp steamer for San Francisco, thence to take rail for Boston. Captain Latimer's party went home by way of the Horn. When they reached Boston they found that Carter Monckton had arrived before them, and from something he told his father the elder Monckton had hurriedly sold his interest in the shipping firm, and both had left the city. There was little doubt, even in Mr. Undercliff's mind, as to the manner in which the money for the robbery of which Edgar Thorne was unjustly accused, had first disappeared from the company's safe and then reappeared again.

But despite the fact that his name was unstained before all men, and that

* friends welcomed him on every hand, Edgar Thorne was not contented. His heart, as he had said, was in his little coral kingdom, and before a year had passed he sailed for Valparaiso. And two sorrowing young people saw him off on the steamer.

But then, it was only for a little while. Thorne will take his degree this June and in the fall he and Sydney will visit his father in the Pacific island—on their wedding journey.

THE END.

W. Bert Foster.

THAT MAY APPLE.

The well nigh tragic consequences of a deviation from the direct course home after an attendance at church—An utterly unwelcome side issue to a love affair, and the remarkable solution to the mystery of a night.

A FEW months after I began reading law, back in the thirties, with old Judge McDowell, in Spencer, Indiana, he sent me out one Saturday to collect, for a client—"Uncle Billy" Criss—the sum of \$847, due on purchase of a farm, from a man named Jonas Harding, who lived about fourteen miles from the town. I got the money, gave Harding his receipt and the deeds, took dinner with him, and started back to Spencer. On the way, I thought it would be a good idea to make a detour of three or four miles and call upon a family named North—or, to be more exact, upon one member of that family, Miss Mary. It was early in the afternoon, lovely spring weather, and my opportunities for seeing Mary were none too frequent, so the idea was not one admitting of debate.

The Norths gave me a hearty welcome and declared I must remain with them until Monday. Of course I affected to demur, for appearances' sake, but that was just what I wanted and there was no reason why I should not consent, except, perhaps, that I ought to turn the \$847 over to Judge McDowell at the earliest practicable moment. I spoke of that, having already made the collection my excuse for calling, but had to admit that Monday morning would be as soon as any use could be made of the money. So I decided to remain.

Supper was followed by an hour or two of hickory nuts, cider, and general talk. Then the family gradually dropped off to bed, one by one, until Mary and I were left together before the kitchen fire. Although it was early June, the nights were chilly enough to make a fire agreeable. Besides, a log fire, on a great wide hearth, imparts a cheery, home-like feeling and renders other illumination unnecessary, so long as you are not reading. Of all great aids to human happiness, in the courting line, an old fashioned fire, in the month of June, when it doesn't need to be kept up bright, is in my estimation one of the most potent.

Mary and I sat up a good while and I found courage to tell her all about my prospects and hopes and how inextricably she was mixed up with both, and—well, the long and short of it is, that when I kissed her good night she

was engaged to be my wife as soon as I had been admitted to the bar and won my first case in court.

Sunday morning, Mary and I went to church together. Most of the congregation came on horseback, some from seven or eight miles away, and after church, when we mounted, Mary proposed that we should visit her uncle John Arney, dine there, and ride home in the cool of the evening. I had no objections to offer. Of course, I understood that I was to be offered for family inspection, but the ordeal was one every young man intending to marry had to face.

Mary's cousins, Hattie and Deborah Arney, overtook and joined us on the road—fine, large, healthy girls, with frank, honest eyes and clear complexions, outspoken in speech and hearty in laughter, more like my Mary than any other girls I ever saw. The old folks proved to be splendid, time mellowed models of the girls. Mr. Arney especially pleased me, he was such a big, lion headed specimen of the strong, brave, straightforward, self reliant pioneer.

Shortly before we sat down to dinner, a young man came in and was introduced to me as Jacob Arney, the son. I did not like his looks. He seemed to have a surly manner and a lowering, suspicious countenance. When we were introduced, he simply nodded, without a word, and turned away, for which I mentally set him down as a sulky brute. But I was unjust, as I soon learned, for the poor fellow was deaf and dumb. Despite my feeling that his affliction entitled him to pitying sympathy, I could not banish a sense of repulsion that he awakened in me and felt that he returned my instinctive aversion. All through dinner, if I glanced in his direction, I found his eyes fixed loweringly upon me, or upon Mary, as if he resented her having brought me there.

While we were at table a violent storm burst forth. The roars of thunder were almost continuous and the fierce glare of the lightning showed masses of water, rather than rain drops, driven almost horizontally by the furious gale that tore up forest trees and threatened to unroof the house and barn. That elemental riot lasted two hours, until night had fallen, a night dark as a crow.

"You can't get back to the North place tonight," Mr. Arney told us. "It would be madness to attempt fording the creek, and the road crosses it twice. Where it wouldn't have reached your horses' knees this morning, it is now a raging torrent, ten feet deep. So you've got to stay here—whether you like it or not," he added, speaking directly at me, with a mischievous little smile. He guessed, rightly, that I had expected to sit up with Mary that night. But we had to resign ourselves to the inevitable.

All the evening Jacob sat watching Mary and me, particularly me. Until you have been steadily eyed for two hours, by a silent, motionless man, whose antagonism shines in his eyes, and who, as you know, is in a world of silence, where nothing distracts his attention from watching you, where he cannot be influenced by anything you say and is pretty certain to put the wrong construction upon whatever you do—not until then will you know how profoundly uncomfortable and nervous such a thing can make you.

Bedtime came and Jacob was detailed to show me to the guest chamber,

on the ground floor, back of the sitting room. There he placed on the bureau the candle he carried, and, turning to me with his eyes fairly blazing, tapped sharply with the forefinger of his right hand on my breast. I don't know why I should have thought that he meant to ask if I carried there the considerable sum of money in my possession, for I don't know that he was even aware of my having it, but that was my understanding of his pantomime and I nodded affirmatively, before I considered what I was doing. He had guessed the right place, for every tap he gave there was squarely upon the sheepskin wallet in which I had carefully stowed Uncle Billy's \$847. He scrutinized my countenance keenly a few seconds, then nodded, turned upon his heel and left me alone.

I do not think it at all strange that his queer conduct made me uneasy. His good guess at the hiding place of my treasure seemed to have an ugly significance; I didn't like his looks any way; and, for the first time in my life I believe, the possibility of being robbed occurred to me. I said to myself that such a thing in that house would be impossible, but something whispered to me that Jacob meant no good when he so audaciously tapped my wallet.

Locks, on interior doors, in farm houses, were hardly ever seen then, in that part of the country, and in fact were generally lacking from outside doors. We were yet so uncivilized that thieves were scarce among us. My room door had only a simple thumb latch to hold it, and I could fasten it in no other way than by jamming a splinter from a wall log into the little cast iron guard over the latch. Of course that did not secure it, but might prevent it being forced without such noise as would awaken me. The lower sash of the window was held down by a big nail loosely thrust into a gimlet hole in the casing and seemed secure enough.

My bed had two mattresses, an upper one of thin corn shucks, and a lower of straw—with a big slit on top, near the upper end, for convenience in changing the straw when it was mashed down. Before undressing, I lifted the end of the upper one, opened the loose ticking of the lower and poked my wallet in among the straw. Then I got into bed, but lay awake a long time. I had a great big scare upon me about that money, utterly without reasonable foundation, but none the weaker therefor. If I'd had a pipe, I would have dressed and sat up by the window all night, smoking and thinking about Mary, with the wallet in my pocket. But I had no pipe. At length, sleep insensibly stole upon me, and when I opened my eyes again, the sun was shining into my window.

I sprang quickly out of bed, washed, and had nearly completed dressing, before once thinking of the wallet, so completely had my fright of the night before passed away, and when it did recur to my remembrance, I smiled at my foolish fears. Nevertheless, I went at once to get it, that it might not be forgotten in the straw.

To my unspeakable horror and consternation it was gone! And in its stead I found—a big, ripe May apple!

The loss overwhelmed me. Small as the sum seems nowadays, it was large then, and I knew I could not make it good. Judge McDowell would

certainly hold me to a rigid accountability, as Uncle Billy Criss would hold him, and I wasn't very sure, at that point in my legal studies, whether I was more likely to go to prison for embezzlement or breach of trust.

Hardly knowing what I did, I went on dressing and soon made another discovery. My watch and chain, my most cherished possessions at that time, had also disappeared. I began looking about sharply for clues to the thief, with a strong presentiment of where they would lead to if I found any. Jacob Arney was in my mind's eye, from the moment I found the May apple instead of the wallet.

It was easy to see how the robber had got in. The big nail displaced from the sash lay upon the floor, and I noted that it could easily have been drawn from its place by the blade of a table knife slipped up on the outside, between the two sashes. I raised the lower one and looked out. Deep grass grew right up to the wall, so steps out there would be inaudible and would leave no tracks. But that some one had been there the night before was proved by the broken branch of a rose bush close by the window. The door had not been tampered with.

I had no appetite for breakfast, and looked so ill that Mrs. Arney—a good, motherly old lady—wanted to give me a big dose of quinine at once. What to do, I could not determine. If I proclaimed my loss and declared my suspicions, there would no doubt be a stormy scene, and I could not know how Mary might take my suspecting her cousin of a robbery. Sooner than break off our engagement I would have submitted quietly to the loss of all I possessed then and a great deal of what I hoped to have. If I had seen Jacob, I think I would have tackled him, and at least tried to make him understand he must give back my money and watch, but I was told he had “gone to the mill.” And that, in the humor I was in, seemed a suspicious circumstance.

I was a dull companion for Mary on our ride to her home that morning, though I did my best to rally from my depression. More than once, when she joked me about my low spirits, I was tempted to tell her everything, but restrained myself.

* * * * *

How I was to meet Judge McDowell was the immediate trouble that occupied my mind when I bade farewell to Mary. He would have to know of my misfortune, and the sooner he could be informed the better; but the nearer I got to town, the more anxious I became in contemplation of the possible consequences if he, with his characteristic energy, insisted upon pushing matters for restitution of the money and, possibly, punishment of the thief. It would, I felt, put an impassable gulf between Mary and me forever, if he sent her cousin to prison.

In those days, when the struggle for existence in this Western country was ruder and fiercer, if not sharper, than it now is, people stood by each other, family ties were stronger, and personal friendships more sacred than they have since become. Life's lesson to men then was “stand together,” which, to my thinking, has been badly replaced by the modern one “each for himself and the fittest only survives.” Better a savage clan than a horde of Ishmaelites.

I decided that I would lie to the judge; that I would simply tell him I had lost the money, without knowing where, and would get my father to make it good for me. But I never could lie well, easy as the accomplishment seems to many who are not even attorneys. The judge was in court—for the defense in a murder trial—and I got no chance to speak with him until after a late adjournment in the evening. Then I told him the story. I had planned that the wallet must have worked out of my pistol pocket while I was in the saddle and dropped on the road. He heard me through without interruption, and then said blandly, "Now, Bob, tell me the truth about it."

Well, that "broke me all up," as the boys say now. I realized that, like George Washington, I couldn't tell a lie, even though I wanted to. And for the first time it flashed upon me that he might think I had appropriated the money for my own benefit. So I told him the whole story, just as it was; about Mary and everything. He thought it all over for several minutes, and then said, with unusual deliberation of speech:

"I am averse to a positive finding upon merely circumstantial evidence; but, so far as I can at present see, the only person to whom suspicion points is Jacob Arney. Mind! I do not say that I think he stole the money, but simply that the circumstantial evidence is unfavorable to him. But—why the mischief should he have put a May apple in place of the wallet?"

It hadn't struck me very forcibly before, but really it was an extraordinary thing that he should have done so. Possibly he fancied there was something humorous in the substitution; but he did not look like a fellow addicted to humor. Finally the judge said,

"Luckily the term ended today, and I have a little leisure, so I'll ride over there with you, tomorrow, and see if we cannot straighten this out."

"But, judge," I said, feeling anxious again about Mary, "even if we find he is guilty, I must beg of you not to prosecute him. It will be enough if we get the money back. In fact, I would rather call upon my father to make it good for me than send to jail a poor fellow so deeply afflicted as Jacob is, and whose mind, for aught I know to the contrary, may be no better than his ears or his tongue."

"And, who is Mary's cousin," added the shrewd old judge, with a grin. "Well, I will not prosecute him, my boy. I have no such intention—provided we obtain the money."

The next forenoon we rode out to Arneys'. I felt that I could get along better in the disagreeable business before us, now that Mary would not be present, and congratulated myself upon having the judge along to do most of the talking, but fancy my feelings if you can, when, upon turning from the highway into Arneys' lane, I recognized Mary's brown mare hitched at the gate and knew the girl would be inside the house. She had ridden over from home that morning, on some woman's business between her and her cousin, Hattie, and when I looked up from the mare to the house, there she stood on the porch, with both the Arney girls.

I introduced Judge McDowell, who greeted the ladies with the graceful old time courtliness that became him so well. Then Mr. Arney and Jacob came together from the barn and with them, too, I made him acquainted.

A sort of awkward pause ensued, then the judge stepped into the breach.

"Mr. Griscom and myself," he said, "are out this morning on a rather unpleasant errand. We are trying to look up some money he collected on Saturday, but did not succeed in carrying to Spencer."

"Oh, Robert!" exclaimed Mary, with impulsive sympathy. "Did you lose all that money?"

I said simply, "Yes," and she turned to the Arney girls with "Oh! Isn't that awful?"

"You knew, then, about his having it?" the judge asked her, very suavely, but, from force of habit, fixing her with his cross examination eye.

"Oh, yes," she replied innocently. "I was talking with Hattie about what a lot of money it was to be carrying around."

"Ah! Then Miss Hattie also knew of it?" remarked the judge, very sweetly, with a deferential little bow toward that young lady.

"Why, we all talked about it," responded Hattie, "and it was all we could do to prevent Debby demanding a sight of it, because she never saw so much at once, and wanted to."

"Well, so I did; and so I do yet," declared the younger sister, at which there was a general laugh.

"Mr. Griscom," demanded the judge, turning to me, "could you have gratified the young lady's wish for a sight of that money when you came here on Sunday afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Could you have done so on Monday morning?"

"No, sir; I could not."

A sudden stillness, as of death, fell upon the group. For a moment all stood as if paralyzed. Then Mr. Arney, involuntarily taking a step forward, inquired in a grave and anxious tone:

"What does this mean? Do you think you have lost anything in my house?"

"Much as it grieves me to say it, Mr. Arney, I do," I replied.

He staggered backward, as if I had dealt him a stunning blow, his face purpled, and he clutched at his throat as if choking. Jacob, seeing his father's great agitation and being utterly unable to comprehend anything of what was going on, pushed himself forward, making frantic pantomimic gestures of appealing question and those horrible inarticulate sounds that burst from dumb lips in moments of intense excitement. Evidently he was asking, in a way his family understood, what was the trouble, but neither of those who could have satisfied his curiosity had any time to do so just then; and his father, gripping his shoulder with an unconscious exercise of strength that made the poor fellow wince, literally flung him back out of the way.

"This thing's got to be looked into," cried the old man hoarsely. "If there's a thief in my house, I want to know it."

"Mr. Griscom"—and the judge again addressed me—"will you be so good as to tell us clearly, with the closest possible attention to details, when you last saw the wallet containing the money in your care, where you placed it, and what followed?"

So directed, amid a silence as deep as if animation had suddenly been suspended in those about me, I told all the facts I have already related, carefully avoiding, however, any mention of my suspicions as to the thief.

"My God!" exclaimed Mr. Arney. "Some burglar must have clomb into the window, in the night!"

For a moment no one spoke. Then the judge, treating me as a witness on the stand, resumed his examination, asking, "When you went to your room that night, who accompanied you?"

"Jacob Arney."

"Tell me what he did, when he and you were alone together in that room?"

"He placed himself before me, and, fixing his eyes upon mine, tapped several times with his right forefinger on the wallet, which was in the left inside pocket of my vest."

"Tapped on the vest, on the outside, over the wallet, you mean, do you not?" persisted the judge.

I knew his cunning way of compelling attention to a salient point, by that sort of pretended anxiety for extreme precision of statement, and saw in Mr. Arney's face that it had not failed of effect. But he had not driven it in far enough to suit him, even yet.

"As if to assure himself that it was there?" he went on.

"I will not go so far as to say that was his object. I simply state the fact."

"Then he was the last person, so far as you are aware, who could have been cognizant of the money being in your possession?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long was it, after he left the room, that you placed the wallet in the under mattress, before going to bed?"

"I do not know exactly. Probably seven or eight minutes."

"Long enough for a person to have left your room, gone out of the front door, and passed around the house, to where a view of your movements, through the window, could be obtained?"

"Amplly."

"Did you put the wallet in the middle of the mattress, or near the upper end?"

"The latter."

"Where it could have been reached by a hand cautiously slipped between the mattresses, without waking you?"

"So it seems."

"You are sure about the nail being in the window casing when you went to bed and on the floor when you got up? Also, about the freshly broken branch of the rose bush?"

"Yes, sir."

With calm politeness Judge McDowell turned to Mr. Arney and asked, "What do you deduce, sir, from the facts presented?"

"My God, judge," answered the father, in a voice like a sob, "it all seems to point to my boy Jake. But I'd answer with my life for him. He's

mightily afflicted, but an honest, truer hearted boy don't live on this earth than Jack. Why, he'd wrong nobody."

As he spoke, he looked with anguish and affection upon his unhappy son, and the eyes of every one present followed the direction of his impassioned gaze. The young man seemed almost maddened by this concentration of attention upon him, the reason for which he could not divine, and springing forward, with his countenance distorted by emotion, he seized the lapels of his father's coat and shook him, as if he would force an explanation, even by violence. Then Hattie came down from the porch and told him. The movements of her fingers, hands, and arms, and her changes of facial expression, were rapid as lightning and executed with a vehemence that was startling. I cannot describe the strange, horribly "creepy" feeling it gave me, to see her, perfectly silent herself and in dead silence all about, abandoning herself to that tornado of passionate pantomime, and to behold how, in swift response, intense amazement flashed and then hot indignation blazed in his set, white face.

When she stopped, he emitted one of his blood curdling, beast-like smothered howls and at one bound placed himself before me, his glaring eyes not a foot from mine, his hands tremulously beating his breast, and the inarticulate sounds from his lips making my heart ache with pity for the agonized efforts of his frenzied will to control his useless organs of speech. The poor fellow acted as if crazy and, I believe, very nearly was so, but I understood him. He was demanding if I suspected him of having stolen the money. It was too solemn a moment for anything but the simplest truth, whatever its consequences. I nodded affirmatively.

Mechanically he moved backward a pace or two, and stood motionless as a statue, his face dead white like that of a corpse. I comprehended the agony of that dumb soul and in the same instant an intuitive sense of his absolute innocence flashed upon me, as far beyond argument or doubt as if it had been a revelation direct from heaven. It seemed to me as if I would gladly have given years of my life if I had not nodded; and as if not all the money in the world was worth the infliction of such agony upon a human soul. But the mischief was done. I could only await the consequences, hoping that when he became more calm I might make some atonement. Suddenly he wheeled, and darted into the house.

I glanced up at Mary. Her face was a reflex of Jacob's, white and agonized; and the same expression was in the countenances of his father and sisters. His mother, thank God, was not present. Only the judge looked quite calm and unconcerned. Either he had so often seen men's hearts in their faces that he had grown hardened to the pain of others, or experience had taught him that faces, and even souls, as well as lips, can lie, and so had made him cynical. I caught a sparkle of triumph in his eyes when Jacob ran into the house, just a flash and no more, but sufficient to show he supposed the young man had gone to get the wallet and give it up.

When Jacob came out again, which was very quickly, he carried in his hands two rifles. He put the weapons in his father's hands, pantomimed

with great vehemence for a minute or two, and then went away to the end of the porch, where he stood still, with his arms folded and his back toward us, looking over the meadow.

Mr. Arney turned to me and said, "My boy says he knows nothing of your wallet, did not even know you had one; that you entirely misunderstood his meaning when he touched your breast; that the world isn't big enough for him and the man who calls him a thief; and that you will have to shoot it out with him. And I reckon he's right."

With that, as calmly as he ever did anything in his life, he made a sign or two to his daughter Debby, on the porch. Without hesitation she brought out to him and placed in his hands, silently, a powder flask, bullet pouch, and cap box. Then she and her sister returned to the porch, where they stood a little way from Mary.

The rifles were muzzle loaders, as all our guns were in those days, and the old fellow, after snapping a cap on each to be sure it was empty, took a couple of greased muslin patches from the patch box in the stock of one, and proceeded to load both, with the greatest possible care and evenness of preparation.

Judge McDowell looked perplexed and troubled. He drew me aside and whispered, "I fear we have made a terrible mistake, involving very serious consequences. But there is nothing to do now but go ahead on the chivalric line he has elected. It is rather old fashioned now, however. I don't suppose he knows, or cares, that it ceased to be legal as long ago as 1819. But it's simple, has respectable precedents, and perhaps does substantial justice as often as any court. Fire first if you can, but be sure of your aim. That chap has a killing eye."

Pretty comfort, that! I knew the judge was only talking because he was too nervous to keep quiet. Should I shoot first and try to be sure of my aim? I would just as soon he shot me as that I shot him, for Mary would be no more lost to me in one case than in the other. And, firmly believing him innocent, as I now did, I had no moral right to kill him, merely to save my own life. I resolved that I would not attempt to do so. Yet I could not refuse to face him. If I did I would be thought a coward and Mary just as much lost to me as if I were dead or had killed him. In that community a sheep thief was more respected than a coward. So the situation held nothing else for me, logically, than that I should stand up and be shot, and I made up my mind to meet my inevitable fate like a man.

I looked around for Mary, with a half formed idea of saying good by to her, but she had gone away to the farther end of the porch, where she stood alone, her face turned from us and her arms wound around one of the pillars to keep herself up. That she was either weeping or praying, or perhaps both, I did not doubt, and hesitated about approaching her.

Mr. Arney, at this juncture, came to me, with the two rifles lying together on his left arm, and said,

"I've loaded them even, fair and square; one's as good as the other; take your choice." Mechanically I took the one nearest me and he went on: "You're a stranger on our ground, and maybe Jake may have some advan-

tage of you in practice ; so, to sort of even things up, I'll let you name your distance and put your back to the sun."

"I would prefer to leave all the details to you, Mr. Arney," I replied.

"Very well. We'll make it fifteen paces. Can you wheel and fire?"

I said I could, but it was only true in the same degree that any man who is not paralyzed can turn himself around and shoot off a gun. As for the lightning-like half revolution, sudden statuesque rigidity, and instantaneous accuracy of aim contemplated in the code phrase "wheel and fire," I had never tried it then, and have since convinced myself that I could not, firing in that fashion, hit a large barn at ten paces distance, except perhaps by accident.

"I'll give the word," the old man continued, "so as you can hear it, and swing my arm with each count, so that the glint of the motion will catch his eye. He can't hear, you know. When I raise my hat on 'Fire!' the shadow will fall before him so he will know it's time to wheel. Does that all seem fair and square to you, sir?"

I said it did.

Talk about your "Roman fathers"! I make bold to affirm there never was one of them a grander sight, for gods and men, than that noble old fellow, who so calmly and justly, with such considerate courtesy of honesty, went steadily ahead arranging the details to stake the life of his only son as he deemed honor demanded, while his heart was breaking. And I was to shoot first and make sure of my aim! Not if I knew myself.

We went around to the back of the house, and over a little way, to a new clearing, just we four men. As we started, I heard on the porch a sort of rustling and a soft thump that made me look around quickly. Mary was no longer standing by the pillar, but at its foot was a confused heap of girl and garments on the floor, and the sisters were running to my poor sweetheart's aid. I had to go on to be killed.

Mr. Arney, when we reached the ground he chose, placed his son and gave him his rifle. Then he stepped off the fifteen paces toward the sun for my position—and I may remark that the distance suddenly seemed very short—and placed me.

Just as he was about leaving me to take his post midway between us and to one side, I glanced down at the ground to see that my footing was clear, for I intended wheeling to look my death in the face. In that instant my glance was arrested by the great wilted leaves of a large May apple, or "mandrake" plant, protruding, in a reversed position from a hole, near the ground, in a low, rotten stump, close beside which I had been stationed. Without thinking why, but obeying an involuntary impulse, I exclaimed, "Hold on!" and Mr. Arney came back to my side.

I have never been able to explain it to my own satisfaction, but am willing to take my oath to it, that all the while we were going through that painful scene before the porch, the scent of May apples was strong in my nostrils, running through every other impression on my senses, as music is distinctly heard through speech. I could not have been mistaken in it, for the peculiar, sharp perfume is very familiar and pleasing to me. And the

odor had floated around me all the way, as if some power sought to force my dull memory to recognition of the real clue to the mystery. Yet, there was no May apple any way near enough for its scent to have reached me, and I did not wear the coat in which I had carried the one I found in the mattress.

When Mr. Arney returned to me, I gave him the rifle, which he took mechanically, and stood watching me, in evident surprise, as I stooped down and drew the wilted leaves and limp stalk of the plant out of the stump. Something clung to its root and was drawn out with it—the chain attached to my watch. With a cry of exultation I could not repress, I thrust my hand deep in the cavity and brought out the lost wallet!

I was the only one who had any idea of how it got there. Of course, I could not know positively, but I believe that I, myself, had hidden it in that place. When a boy I had been a somnambulist, but the doctors told my mother I would outgrow the habit, and I supposed I had done so. But my nervous excitement, that Sunday evening, doubtless provoked a return of it. I had climbed out of the window, found a hiding place for my valuables, and gone to bed again, all in a dream, of which I had no remembrance upon awaking. The saving of the May apple was probably the product of a lingering impression of fondness, in waking consciousness, for that wild fruit.

Jacob and the judge, seeing my excited action, joined us just as I drew out the wallet. The young man refused to take the shot at me, which I offered to stand, to give him satisfaction for the wrong I had done him, and we have been warm friends ever since.

Not until long after Mary and I were married did he tell me why he tapped my breast that night. He had been in love with her all his life, but his affliction prevented his thinking of making her his wife. Tortured as he was by jealous pain at seeing me her accepted lover, his deepest concern was for her and he meant to ask me seriously, man to man, if in my heart I loved her truly. Accustomed as he was to the quick understanding of his pantomime by all his family, it did not occur to him that I could not catch his meaning. So, when I nodded, he went his way resignedly.

J. H. Connelly.

CONTENTMENT.

If all our lives were one broad glare
 Of sunlight, clear, unclouded;
 If all our paths were smooth and fair,
 By no soft gloom enshrouded;
 If all life's flowers were fully blown
 Without the sweet unfolding,
 And happiness were rudely thrown
 On hands too weak for holding—
 Should we not miss the twilight hours,
 The gentle haze of sadness?
 Should we not long for storms and showers
 To break the constant gladness?

THE GOLD DELUGE.

Astounding consequences arising from the discovery of a chemist—Terror of the governments to whom unlimited gold meant destruction—The extraordinary lengths to which Erik Poulsen was driven to maintain his independence.

CHAPTER I.—NEAR THE GOAL.

ON a warm, still August night Erik Poulsen sat in his laboratory, bent over a glass receptacle containing a milky mixture in which the positive and negative wires leading from a galvanic battery were immersed. The window was open. Now and then a miller flew into the room, butted against the chimney of the petroleum lamp, and finally fell into the flame. Outside an owl screeched now and then in the old lime tree, and a mouse squeaked behind the worm eaten wall of the room.

Erik was oblivious of all that passed around him and was not aware that it was past two o'clock; nor did he care. With a frowning countenance and deeply wrinkled eyebrows he stared in nervous impatience at the glass receptacle before him. Finally he reached over and drew the one pole wire from the mixture. A small plate of platinum, apparently covered with a thin sheet of wax, was attached thereto. This covering Erik examined critically, scratched it slightly with his finger nail, and then held the plate over an alcohol flame, after having poured a few drops of a fluid over it. But when the entire surface became covered with small air bubbles he became angry and threw the thing aside, then filtered the milky concoction and began to evaporate the substance thus obtained.

In the stove, on the other side of the room, he had a bright fire burning, over which several crucibles were suspended. He examined their contents anxiously, added a little brown powder to one of them, thereby causing a white, steamy vapor to arise; then reexamined the solution and shook his head. He now fastened a small, delicate graphite crucible inside of a ring of platinum, filled half of it with pieces of a light yellow metal, imbedded in which were a number of pale red crystals. He then hung this over the fire. He seized the bellows handle, and vigorously fanned the flames until they crackled loudly.

A fierce white heat surrounded the crucible so that the platinum ring itself turned red. The metal in the crucible melted and lay, a shining, glistening surface, in the fire. He now introduced the two pole wires into the crucible most carefully, taking the greatest care that he did not touch bottom. One quarter of an hour he stood so; the metal rods became hotter and hotter and finally he could hold them no longer, even with the wooden handles. Then he withdrew the wires and lifted the crucible from the fire.

He did not wait until the wires had cooled, but immediately placed one of them under a powerful microscope and examined the surface minutely. He could discover no trace of any foreign substance thereon and, laying it aside, busied himself with the contents of the crucible, which had in the mean time cooled off somewhat. Very carefully he poured out all its contents, placed it in an alembic filled with water in which the crystals which had been imbedded in the yellow metal and now had turned into a glass-like substance, quickly dissolved. He refiltered the entire matter and again evaporated it, until he had the pure metal before him.

He now stepped to the delicate analytical scale, laid the metal on it and weighed it.

"Again five milligrams short," he muttered, and placed his hand to his brow. "Then that was *not* an accident? But why? I cannot comprehend it."

Mentally absorbed he approached the window, dropped into a chair, and stared at the night shrouded sky.

"And yet it means something," he mumbled to himself. "It is a certain indication, because, if the gold were not destroyed in some manner or other by the process, it would be entirely inexplicable. There are five milligrams less each time, and if thereby amorphous gold is created it cannot be demonstrated—at least with the instruments at my command. Could I only work with larger quantities; I have only a small amount—fifty grains—but it shall succeed—must succeed, even if I exhaust my brain entirely! No one ever before came as near a solution of the question as I did—that I feel certain of; oh, it is bewildering, excruciating to see all those sparks flimmer and not be able to unite them into an entirety and thus solve the matter. That there is a solution, there is no doubt; the forms are absorbed and dissolve and amalgamate in one another, but—how? What law governs it? Oh, could I discover that! If only the morrow brought success! Small wonder that a man's brain turns at the thought. Such a discovery! I know of no other which would compare with it. Blast the gold! This is, first and last, only a question of the correlativeness between power, strength, and original matter, whereby the visible, so called basic element is produced, which again is subdivided into hundreds of other forms according to—yes, according to—what? *There's* the mystery! I must procure a spectroscope, but where am I to get the three hundred kronen? I must follow the matter as far as it goes, and having found the means for everything thus far, I surely will make this also possible."

His soliloquy ended, he again busied himself with his apparatus, threw a shovel of coal into the fire, and with the bellows produced a bright flame.

"I want to see any way, whether it is not possible to catch a trace of amorphous gold with a platinous sponge; I feel convinced it is present; only a trial will tell."

He recommenced his experiments while the day dawned, and all the noise that the cocks around the factory could possibly make a-crowing resounded in his ears with a din. The lamplight expired without his noticing it, as daylight was now sufficient for his work. Undaunted, he worked away with

the materials which obstinately retained their secrets and only now and then, as though to annoy him, showed him a slight, a very slight trace of what he was looking for, only to let him grope around again in the dark like a blind man. He became excited, grasped at this and that, in the hope that accident might be his ally and show him the right road, but no; only the same well known phenomena, well known elements, the formula of which he could rattle off at his fingers' ends.

Not a sign, not a trace of those five milligrams of gold, which disappeared so mysteriously. Where had they vanished to? That was the momentous question.

CHAPTER II.—AT LAST.

AGAIN the summer's end drew near, the autumn storms came and soon all the beautiful tints of the trees gave way to a bleak gray of the naked limbs. The nights lengthened and were cold, and the first snow of the new season had begun to fall in November. Erik's wife sat at the window sewing; without, the weather was dreary and uncomfortable. The sooty factory smoke covered everything in view, the roads were a mass of soft mire, and the blue sky had been hidden some time. 'How long was this to last with Erik, she asked herself? Things could not go on much longer as they had. Erik had hardly slept during the last two nights. In the morning his wife laid her hand on his forehead and found it hot and clammy. She tried with all a woman's diplomacy to prevail upon him to change his course but in vain. Matters had gone too far. She grieved severely over the thought that she herself had perhaps been partly the cause of his becoming imbued with the one idea, by telling him one day that the passing laborers believed he was making gold. They were right after all.

Her anger against him had vanished, and she felt that his strange behavior was not the result of any intention on his part to neglect her; worryment and sorrow alone prevailed and caused her the deepest grief; she had seen that for matters to continue as they were then, could end but in ruin.

Her attention was arrested by the approaching steps of some one running. She raised her eyes and grew pale with fright. Her husband was hurrying toward her. He wore no hat and his hair was flying in the wind. Like a flash of lightning it came over her that he had lost his reason! She rose, but was rooted to the spot—she stood as though transfixed. Her husband rushed through the door wildly, with his face glowing like fire from an all consuming fever, while the veins on his forehead stood out, swollen to the thickness of whipcords.

"There!" With this one word he threw a small package wrapped in paper on her sewing table. The heavy concussion caused it to open and a fine brown powder was scattered all over the top of the table, while Erik grasped his wife in his arms and pressed her to him so tightly that she nearly lost her breath. He let her go, then sank down before her on his knees, buried his face in the folds of her dress, and hysterically sobbed forth the one word: "*Gold!*"

With a great effort she preserved her outward calm demeanor, and leading him to a sofa, prevailed upon him to lie down. She had mastered her first fright, and now attributed his condition to a feverish attack, brought on by the mental strain in connection with his excitable temperament. She knew that the first requirement was rest and quiet.

She placed a chair near where her husband lay and sat down beside him. His pulse throbbed feverishly, his cheeks burned with the internal fire, and he was very restless. Did he really believe that he had made the almost impossible discovery? It certainly *was* impossible, notwithstanding what he had said. It could not be, and he had not been the first who had suffered by bitter experience. How often had the alchemists of old imagined that they had discovered the true solution? I only Erik had profited by their experience before it was too late; how hopeless it was to pursue the unattainable! She resolved to show him nothing but loving kindness and to give him her most devoted care, thus endeavoring to soften the bitterness of disappointment by all the means in her power when he again became conscious and realized what had happened.

Erik's eyes were closed and his lips unconsciously muttered over the great discovery that gave his brain no rest. To quiet him she apparently entered upon all that he said very readily and gently smoothed his burning forehead.

"Oh, that I was so fortunate as to be the one!" he whispered, and taking her hand, continued: "I cannot comprehend it all. Children in schools over the entire world will learn my name—the name of the Danish chemist who made the wonderful discovery. In many countries they will find it difficult to pronounce—but no matter—they will know who it was. Darling, we will begin our travels at once—we both longed so to see the world. But with it all we have been so happy in our small rooms with their low ceilings and narrow limits, and we will often wander back here in thought and to the woods and the moor and beautiful summer evenings, when we were on the heights and watched the glorious sunsets; and to the laboratory in which I made the great discovery. Perhaps we will return to this place again to see it once more. Then you will witness the director receiving us with a floor sweeping bow, and the workmen will surround us to stare. Is not that grand?"

"Yes, dear husband," she answered softly, "but you are so fatigued, you must rest; please try to sleep; it will do you so much good."

"Yes, I will try, but it is so hard to sleep when the thoughts surge wildly through my brain—all chemists of the middle ages tried to reach this goal, but they were on the wrong path; it could never have been done as they tried to do it. The discoveries and researches of many centuries must of necessity precede the discovery. A pillow! thanks; it does me good to rest my head—so—oh, to think that I was the fortunate discoverer! I cannot forget it—I!—I!—my darling wife!"

Thus he lay and spoke for a long time, but gradually came the reaction after the intense mental strain; his voice grew weaker, his respiration slower and more regular, and at last he sank into a deep, heavy slumber, not disturbed by the slightest movement.

Evening came. The young wife lit the lamp and resumed her needle-work. Dead silence reigned in the room, and while her thoughts were busy with other matters she attempted to work. It was impossible; her fingers were uncertain and she rested quietly, staring fixedly before her.

Her husband's mental condition was not quite comprehensible, and the most disagreeable impressions haunted her. How would he awaken? Stronger and fully restored, or—the thought made her shudder. What would happen when he discovered his error, when he realized it had all been a nightmare—a chimera? But how was it possible at all he had made such a mistake? Could it be possible, that he, the thoroughly competent chemist, had been so led by his imagination?

Suddenly the thought of the powder he had thrown on the sewing table recurred to her. She rose and crept on tiptoe to the table.

How very heavy that small quantity of powder was! Brown—all brown. Gold, it could not be, it was very soft when passed through the fingers and clung to them like dust. Then she remembered Erik telling her, that gold in a reduced state—so called amorphous gold—was brown and could be tested with boiling nitric acid. If this did not affect it, then it *was* the precious metal. She had not been married to a chemist without learning a few things from him during the hour of instruction he formerly devoted to her in his laboratory.

Quickly she procured a test tube and a small quantity of nitric acid, added a little of the powder to it, and held it over the lamp. Very soon the acid began to boil violently, and when she withdrew the tube from the flame the bubbles vanished and there appeared no reddish brown evaporation of the nitric acid; the brown powder remained at the bottom of the glass tube, entirely unchanged or affected in any way.

For a moment she reeled at the thought that seized her brain, but she steeled herself against it. She could not rely upon her faulty test; coal, for instance, would not be affected by nitric acid either, but yet—if it should be true any way?

"Well, well, just see my little wife making an analysis!" a voice said behind her.

She turned around with a frightened countenance—there stood her husband, a smile on his lips, eying her with proud, intelligent glances. Every trace of weariness had been removed by the restful sleep he had enjoyed, and he was as healthy and strong as ever.

"Oh, Erik," exclaimed his wife, deeply moved and throwing herself impetuously in his arms, "is it really true?"

"Did you not believe what I told you? Yes, my love, it is all true."

She laid her head on his breast with a half suppressed cry and gave way to a violent fit of weeping—a real good cry, that was as the dew falling upon the budding blossoms on a beautiful night in springtime.

"Yes, dear wife," he repeated, taking her by the hand and leading her to the sofa, "it is true. You examined the powder yourself and tested it with the nitric acid. Besides that, I applied all possible tests and employed every reagent known, and also converted it into gold salts, determined the specific

gravity, as well as the atomic weight. No, dearest love, I am as clear headed as ever I was ; I know you thought I was ill and spoke irrationally. It is a fact that everything turned round me when I realized that my experiments were ended and positively knew that everything was as I had surmised and wished. I have made the greatest discovery of the century, and all my dreams of fortune have been transmuted into fact."

"Then it is really true !" Erik's wife took a long breath. "You cannot imagine how apprehensive of evil results I was ; how could I believe such a thing to be possible ? It was too overwhelming. But now I am happy and contented. I have you again, Erik, and all the dark shadows have vanished. I will no longer have to go walking over the mountains alone to watch the sunset. Dear husband, you said we were to travel ; yes, let us do so—I will follow you wherever you go, although I would be just as happy to remain here—here where we were so very happy. But that would be unreasonable—I will be proud and glad that I have such a celebrated man for my husband, and we shall always be happy, shall we not ?"

CHAPTER III.—THE DISCOVERY ANNOUNCED.

EARLY in December Erik and his wife reached the city of Copenhagen, after he had resigned his position as chemist at the factory in Roenningshof. They had agreed to impart no information of the great discovery to any members of the family or their friends, but to make the facts public suddenly and surprise all alike.

Their common sense told them that first of all they must derive some practical benefit themselves from the discovery. They could not deny that when the facts were made public, gold would lose its value as a means of payment, and that the discoverer as well as every one else would be the loser thereby.

His gold was accepted and paper given to him in exchange at the banks, and for this Erik purchased real estate ; that at least was something which was not artificial and which in spite of any financial revolution would, within certain limits, retain its value. The earth meant bread, and bread meant life.

The chemist, Erik Poulsen, consequently became a landed proprietor in Euenen, owner of houses in Copenhagen and of property in foreign countries. He appointed a manager to look after all this, as well as the factory in Roenningshof, which he upon a sudden impulse had purchased, by securing all the shares. The manager was instructed not to mention the name of the owner, at least for the present. When Erik had thus made certain that he would not, as he expressed it, get into trouble on account of a little chloride of platinum, he considered that the time for making public announcement of his discovery had come.

One day he sauntered down to his old professor's residence—Director Dickmann of the Polytechnicum, and editor of the *Danish Chemical Times*. That was the man he wanted ; he had a reputation in scientific circles. He had one grave fault, however—a predilection for clubs and a good glass of

beer. In answer to his knock an irritated voice at last called out "Come in!" Professor Dickmann reclined on a lounge, puffing at a cigar. The daily paper lay on the table, and next to that was a half empty bottle of beer. Below the lounge could be seen another "battery" of about ten full bottles of the same beverage. When the professor heard footsteps he simply turned his head.

"Oh, it's you, Poulsen? Be so good as to take a chair," he said.

"Professor," began Erik, without any further circumlocution, but with the respectful tone of old times, although he knew it would be only a question of saying one word to attain the popularity of ten such professors, "I have made a great discovery."

The answer Erik had hoped for came not; the professor simply grunted quietly, and paid not the slightest attention to his visitor's words.

"I have discovered how to convert base metals into gold," Erik continued, laying stress on each word.

A second grunt, but now sounding rather contemptuous, came from the professor, who grasped his beer glass and emptied it. He replaced the glass slowly on the table, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, murmured, "You don't say so," took up his daily paper and began to read.

"Professor, it is neither a joke nor an absurdity; I have really made that discovery," exclaimed Erik, becoming excited.

"Oh, by the way, Poulsen," replied the professor, without glancing at Erik, "would not a glass of soda do you good? There is some in the corner there; help yourself."

Erik pretended not to have heard. He drew a small phial from his pocket and noisily placed it on the table before the professor. "Do you see that?" he asked.

The professor quietly took the bottle, examined it, and shook its contents. "Hm, yes," he remarked carelessly, "I see very well that it is amorphous gold; but you do not mean to tell me that you shook that out of an old apron?"

"No, but from nitrate of bismuth."

"Nothing else? Listen, Poulsen, I want to tell you something. You may be a very bright fellow, but if you are under the impression that I have taken any more than is good for me this morning, then you are decidedly barking up the wrong tree. Go and see my colleague Rasmussen; he'll swallow the tale whole."

The professor having thus plainly indicated his utter unbelief in his caller's statement, lazily turned his back. Erik's face flushed; he was nonplussed and discomfited for a moment, and finally decided that it was superfluous to venture any additional information. "Adieu, professor," he said, smiling to himself now; "we will perhaps speak of the matter some other time; then perhaps you will be less incredulous."

"The devil!" answered the professor; "we want *optical* and *palpable* evidence in such matters."

When Erik reached the street, he was irresolute as to his next step. His first thought was to call on Professor Rasmussen, but would it be to any pur-

pose? He had been angry at Professor Dickmann for a few moments, but he soon forgot the unpleasantness. All the world knew what he was, prominent though he had once been among scientists. No, to waste a thought on that matter was ridiculous. Erik determined to visit the Dania Bank, then to describe his discovery in a pamphlet, publish it, and mail copies to every scientific society in the world; that was the proper course—the *only* sensible one.

With energetic steps and erect bearing, Erik proceeded on his walk. The street was bathed in clear, beautiful sunlight; he felt exalted—felt himself on a higher plane than his surroundings, and his spirit of pride once thoroughly aroused, he walked so briskly that he soon found difficulty in breathing. He felt that he was in the foremost rank among the leading men of the world.

Accidentally his glances were arrested by a Hebrew strutting along, clad in an extremely rich fur coat, and this Hebrew eyed Erik with an aggravatingly superior mien. Could that individual only realize who the man was whom he passed so contemptuously? Erik smiled to himself when he thought of the panic he had it in his power to create on the stock exchange, did he desire it—why, it would be like striking between an army of ants with a stick—they would be scattered like chaff.

He arrived at the bank, presented his card, and requested to see the privy councilor, Espensen. After a moment's delay, Erik was in his presence. He was a small, pedantic gentleman with a well kept gray goatee, and wearing a stiff, high, old fashioned white collar and stock. He greeted Erik politely and desired to know his wishes.

Certain rumors regarding Erik had become current in financial circles. The public wished to ascertain from what source his wealth had come, but the surmises somehow would not agree. Some said that he had won large sums in the foreign lotteries, others claimed that he had inherited money from an uncle who had died in South America, a millionaire, but others again asserted that Erik had been gold hunting in California and experienced wonderful luck. How else could he have obtained the massive gold bars which he supplied to the banks?

On the other hand it was a positive fact, that he had been chemist at a factory in Roenningshof; had he assumed this position only to discover for himself how the business paid, before purchasing the company's stock? (In spite of all the secrecy maintained, the fact that Erik owned the factory had leaked out.) These things would not harmonize when put together, and people knew not what to think. Undoubtedly, however, he was a very wealthy man, to whom the greatest attention was due, no matter whence his wealth came.

For this reason privy councilor Espensen was the perfection of politeness.

"I have delivered," Erik began, "large quantities of gold bullion to the bank in bars——"

"Yes, yes, very true," the privy councilor replied.

"*I made this gold myself!*"

"Made it!" gasped the privy councilor. "Do you mean to say that the gold you sold us was spurious?" he fairly screamed.

"Not at all," Erik replied calmly; "the gold is genuine."

The privy councilor's countenance assumed its benign expression again. "Certainly. You will pardon my misunderstanding you, even though for a second. The gold is critically tested before being accepted by the bank, and your gold was particularly fine."

"Yes, it was simply *chemically* pure, for the reason that I *made* it by a *chemical* process."

"Oh, now I comprehend," the councilor rejoined; "you mean to say that you obtained it from a kind of gold ore or gold salts—as I believe it is called in chemistry? And you found this salt in the earth, as only a chemist can; this is very interesting. May I ask whether this was in California?"

"Pardon me, councilor, you misunderstand me entirely. I am not a gold digger, but a chemist only, and the gold I delivered to you is made from nitrate of bismuth by a rather simple process. In other words, I have discovered a means of converting a base substance into pure gold!"

The privy councilor raised his eyebrows in astonishment and stared fixedly at Erik, but as the latter remained perfectly calm and did not move a muscle, the councilor's eyes wandered away. Irresolution as to what to say pictured itself in his looks, and an extremely painful pause ensued. "My dear sir," the councilor went on at length, attempting to assume a very severe look, "are you serious? *Positively serious?*"

"Yes," Erik answered, "I am, and I will offer to give you the evidence if you wish it. Lock me in the laboratory or any other place, and provided I have the necessary apparatus at my disposal, I will convert as much bismuth as you wish into gold."

"Hm," mumbled the councilor. "Is it agreeable for you to proceed with me to Engelsted's laboratory immediately? Good."

While they proceeded to the place designated, Erik attempted to open a conversation, but was unsuccessful. The councilor replied politely, but evasively and reservedly, while he at times surveyed Erik sharply with side-long glances. Arrived at the laboratory, Erik was conducted to a small room, and upon his request the privy councilor and the chief chemist, Engelsted, searched him to assure themselves that he had no other gold in his possession except the small phial mentioned. Watchers were posted at the doors and windows. The privy councilor was in a quandary as to what to think and Engelsted laughed softly to himself, tapping his head with his index finger in a suggestive manner.

The necessary instruments and chemicals, among them a large glass jar containing chemically pure nitrate of bismuth, a small glass containing cobalt carbonate, together with other substances and instruments, were placed in the room; also the positive and negative wires from a galvanic battery of twenty elements were conducted into the room. The door was locked, and the "gold maker" left to himself.

Late in the afternoon Erik's work was completed, and he called the others. The privy councilor, who had meantime taken a walk into town, was somewhat feverish and excited, and the head of the laboratory appeared to be supercilious and sarcastic.

Erik pointed to a large glass bowl, the bottom of which contained a brown powder several inches high, out of which, here and there, a few shiny grains glimmered; all of it was covered by a fluid, clear as water. Erik was busying himself removing this fluid with a dipper.

Engelsted was surprised for a moment, and compelled to admit that something strange had occurred, and still dubious, said that he wished to convince himself as to what kind of "stuff" it really was. For this purpose he placed a small quantity of the powder on a glass plate with a spatula, and then left the room. The privy councilor carefully dusted off a chair with his handkerchief, examined it carefully, and seated himself while Erik gradually evaporated the powder.

After fifteen minutes the chief chemist returned, his face a fiery red color, and threw the glass plate he still held in his hand on the table with such violence that it shivered into many pieces. He first stared at Erik and then at the privy councilor, who attempted to look bored.

"It is true!" the chemist finally ejaculated. The words were forced out unwillingly. "True! But how can it be so?" He turned to Erik, and with violent emotions playing on his countenance, he asked, "Atomic vibration; is it not so?"

"Yes," Erik replied, and both scientists exchanged glances of profound understanding.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Poulsen!" exclaimed the chemist at last, and grasped Erik by the hand.

"My God!" gasped the councilor. "Then it is really true? Mr. Engelsted, do you assure me on your solemn word of honor that all this is fact? What a terrible misfortune!"

Both the scientists glanced at him in surprise, as he continued in feverish excitement, "Not one word to any living soul, do you hear? You must swear it to me, gentlemen, positively *swear* it—at least until I consult with higher authorities. It is necessary—*absolutely* so. I depend upon you, Mr. Poulsen. You will hear from me before the day is over."

Unutterably confused, he grasped his hat and suddenly disappeared, but immediately thereafter poked his head into the door. "Do you understand?" he repeated. "Silence is *absolutely*—positively—peremptorily required!"

And he vanished without waiting for an answer.

CHAPTER IV.—THE GOVERNMENT ALARMED.

AFTER Erik had left the laboratory, he half regretted his haste in so surprising the people at the bank. What good would it do him? He had followed only the impulse of the moment, and soon the rumor would be current all over town without finding any believers. What did the councilor mean by his strict injunctions? Was Erik not to speak of his discovery so as not to stampede the stock exchange? That he surely could not, as a scientist, take into consideration. The exchange was as much a matter of indifference to him as the world at large. No, he decided that he had dallied long enough; he would now begin to work earnestly.

That same evening, by the continuous use of the dictionary and grammar, he managed to write a short description of his discovery in French, beginning with the first tests. Next morning he received an order to appear that forenoon at the office of the Minister of the Interior—Hjelm-Asborg-Hjelmstjerne. The letter was penned by the hand of the minister himself, and was couched in the most polite terms. It stated that for good and sufficient reasons—confidential, of course—there was a desire on the part of persons in higher authority to see Mr. Poulsen.

Erik could find no reason for declining the desired conference; in fact, he felt flattered that any attention at all was paid to him. On his way he handed his manuscript to a printer and ordered the pamphlet to be ready by the following day.

His excellency, a fine looking, well built man, about fifty years of age, arose and met Erik when he entered the office. The minister had a face showing a strong character, and his eyes a piercing, penetrating look.

"Good day, Mr. Poulsen," he began in a friendly tone, and offered Erik his hand in a hearty shake. "I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you, as certainly it cannot be denied that you have made a most wonderful and startling discovery—important to the highest degree. At first I was incredulous, but after a test at the university laboratory of your gold (of course, in strict privacy) I must believe that it is a fact. Please be seated and let us chat over the matter. Have a cigar?" His excellency was a man of the world.

They began a conversation about chemistry in general, and all that should be done for this important science, and finally his excellency expressed his great pride that it was a Dane who had made this greatest discovery of many ages. But he would take the liberty to ask Mr. Poulsen whether he had carefully planned how he was to make the matter public and what results such publicity would have?

Erik replied that he had simply given a written description of his discovery to the printer, and expected to send copies the next day to various scientific societies. Every chemist, by following the directions, could then make his own experiments and convince himself that it is the easiest thing in the world to change gold into silver, platinum, or vice versa. Above all, the old theory of basic elements had been utterly destroyed.

"But, my dear sir!" exclaimed his excellency quickly, "do you not see the tendency of all this? I can easily understand that for a scientist like you the greatest value is the scientific one alone, but you surely must agree with me, that the matter is of immense practical importance. I hesitate not in saying that no other discovery ever made will have such a gigantic influence upon existing conditions over the entire world, and therefore the announcement must not be made until the world has been prepared for it, and that very gradually. Mr. Poulsen, we must positively come to some sort of understanding. Suppose you went to the market place, and there publicly announced your discovery. At first you would be disbelieved; people would say you were insane. Now let us assume that you would throw the gold among the masses, to convince them. What would happen?

Every one would pounce upon the precious metal—people would tear each other to pieces, in their attempts to fill their pockets. The lucky ones would get away with as much as they possibly could carry, but when the individual came to consider the value of what he had, he would find that it had no more value than if he had burdened himself with so much copper, and—the same experience would come to every one else. Gold and, in fact, all precious metals—you said it would be an easy matter to make silver or platinum—would lose their values the moment your discovery is made known. In a few hours the telegraph would carry the news all over the world; all stock exchanges, all banks, yes, and all stores and business establishments, must be closed, while commerce would cease entirely. People working for salaries would no longer receive any; the richest people in the world (except those holding large tracts of real estate, which would also lose most of its value) will become poor and, worst of all, a famine will break out. The baker can sell nothing, and no one has money to pay him; the few holders of food supplies will corner them and then—what? It can safely be stated the entire world will be compelled to return to the primitive system of barter; there is no other alternative and before this could again be done, do you know what will happen? The masses will rise in a gigantic revolution; the goldsmiths and bankers will storm the bakeries; the people in towns and cities spread over every part of the open country to plunder the farms and satisfy their hunger. Everything representing order, government, society, and family life would be destroyed and the few only of the criminal classes would remain, waging war upon each other. Do you understand now, Mr. Poulsen, the dire misfortune you can bring upon the world? The axis upon which the world revolves is of gold; take it away and the entire globe will collapse. I can well imagine that you never looked at the matter in this light."

His excellency mopped his brow, and Erik, much embarrassed, nervously twirled his cigar between his fingers and placed his hand to his head. Yes, it was all true, but he could not think clearly just then—some sort of memory of a miserable solution of chloride of platinum which he had made in the factory, went through his mind again. How far into the past that was! He felt a kind of indignation at the gold which had humiliated him so, and which he had finally mastered. What if he should carry out his intentions in spite of all the minister said?

He must have expressed some such sentiment audibly, because the voice of the minister fell harshly on his ear: "Are you bereft of your senses, man? If you attempt to proceed in this manner the government must take its measures for protection against you. There can be no question of permitting you to give the secret of your discovery to the world at large," and a threat lay concealed in the words.

Erik rose. He felt that he was the superior, holding mighty power in his hand. "It is a question whether science *can* take such things as you claim into consideration," he replied.

"Science be hanged! How can you speak now of science?" His excellency began to grow violent. "Your discovery would bring misfortune to

science also. Tell me what benefit there would be to science, if you suddenly told all you know? There would no longer be any universities, nor learned men; nothing but uncouth, vicious masses, fighting, spilling blood, and sacrificing human life for the very necessities of existence."

"Then you would have me keep my discovery secret until my life's end."

"Well yes, if you have it so; what would you gain by hasty action? Honors, say you? There would be neither honors nor celebrity if civilization were destroyed. You would become a pauper yourself, if you were to announce your discovery from the house tops, while now you may have all that your heart may wish for. And apart from this, I can give you my word, governments will not permit you to set the world afire and cause a general revolution. It is silly to speak of freedom and popular rights; dire need will overthrow all laws and—the welfare of the people comes before everything else! Let us understand each other," his excellency continued, as Erik still remained silent, "the governments will not deny your worth, but on the contrary will reward you most liberally. A man like you will make many more great discoveries. A decoration at the present moment would cause a sensation, but in a year so you have means enough to do something which would justify the bestowing of an order. Now, we are agreed?" His excellency offered his hand. "Give me your solemn promise. Years, many years, in fact must pass, before the world will be prepared for your discovery. The various governments can only *gradually* prepare for some other substitute for gold. Many notes must be exchanged between the government representatives and countless conferences held between the states; of course, most secretly. The matter cannot, must not, be made public before the end of at least fifty years. Until then you promise—swear, *secrecy*?" Again his hand was outstretched, but Erik did not take it.

"I cannot bind myself," he said rather shortly. "What you ask is to me life; and I must in any case request time to consider matters. My discovery is my property alone, and I can do therewith as I please."

His excellency rose to his full height.

"You are mistaken, Mr. Poulsen," he said coldly. "You cannot do therewith as you please. If you will not submit in a friendly manner, then—that is your affair!" His excellency coldly bowed Erik out of the room.

CHAPTER V.—POLICE INTERFERENCE AND ESCAPE.

ARRIVED at home, Erik told his wife all that had happened. When she heard what the minister had foretold of the consequences ensuing upon a public announcement of the discovery, she became thoughtful. "Do you not think that he has exaggerated matters very much?" she asked. "Is it possible that the governments can coin no more money in future? Haven't we copper money at present?"

"Yes, as subsidiary coin which is changed to gold by the national banks upon demand—nothing more. The foundation of the currency of any country

and of finance in general, is either gold or silver. Copper and paper money are intended principally for internal commerce, and can only be issued in proportion to the amount of precious metal stored in the bank and treasury vaults. Otherwise the different countries could mint such money in unlimited quantities and then, in a short time, it would have no more value than so many pebbles. No, I fear there is a great deal of truth in what the minister says."

"Then the governments must find some other alternative, and there must be one. It certainly cannot be demanded that you shall forever keep silent in regard to your grand discovery. The majority of people in this world are poor—they would certainly not become much unhappier if there were no more money in circulation. It is a different matter with the wealthy and refined classes. But have they ever shown any regard for the weaker and more unfortunate ones? Do you believe it would be harmful to the world if there were no more aristocratic, indolent idlers? When I think how often in our own home, during my childhood, means of subsistence were almost unknown, how often my father cursed money and the great merchants who crushed the smaller ones under their heels simply because they themselves had the money to sink into their enterprises, then I surely cannot believe that you would do any wrong by making known your discovery, and if it were tomorrow. If it were once done, then people would become accustomed thereto. Do you not think so?"

Erik sat silently thinking, his head resting on his hands.

"I do not know," he answered. "I do not know what to think. I *cannot* think clearly. However, be the consequences what they may, I cannot keep silent—not all my lifetime. What care I for their orders and decorations? They mean only this—bribery. I have a good claim to a name among the leading men of the world. Such a discovery is made but once in a lifetime."

A knock on the door interrupted their conversation. The servant brought a packet containing Erik's manuscript. In the accompanying letter the printer expressed his regret that on account of unforeseen circumstances he was not in a position to take charge of the printing as requested. Erik and his wife knew well what these "circumstances" were, and they were not surprised when, half an hour later, there was another knock on the door, and a police officer requested Erik to present himself that same day at police headquarters.

Silently they ate their dinner; a depressing, unpleasant weight seemed to bear both down. Immediately after dinner Erik threw on his overcoat, and proceeded to police headquarters. He wanted to get the matter over at once. Meantime his wife went to her parents in Munstergasse, where her husband was to call for her.

The chief of police went right to the heart of the matter. He explained that he had received most positive orders from the minister. He desired to act as leniently as possible towards Mr. Poulsen, and not to hinder him in the freedom of his movements, as long as he did not exceed the limits prescribed. *But*—and he could not lay stress enough on the word—at the

slightest attempt in any direction which might lead to serious results for the government, no hesitation would be felt in adopting the most severe measures, and he—the chief of police—could therefore only advise Mr. Poulsen to be careful. It would be painful for the officers in power to be compelled to adopt such severe measures, but they must have regard for the well being of the state. That was all that the chief of police had to say to Mr. Poulsen for the present.

Erik rose.

"I cannot understand what measures you have in mind," he said, "so long as I commit no infraction of the law."

"On this point I do not wish to speak further," replied the chief politely but firmly. "I can only assure you that the means adopted will surely attain the end. I bid you good afternoon."

Erik's wife at once divined what it was the chief of police had requested.

"Well, my dear husband?" she inquired, as she greeted him.

"Tomorrow we leave for foreign parts."

She nodded approval and pressed the hand she held.

"But, good heavens," Mrs. Lindberg interjected, "what do you propose to do, my children? You come suddenly to the city, after giving up your good position down there, and refuse all explanation. You have the means to live in the best hotel and now you are going traveling. The gossips say that you have bought the Naesby estate and three houses in Amalia Street, but that cannot be so? How did you get all the money?"

"My dear people," Erik replied, "all this is in connection with certain things which for the present must remain a mystery. I can only say to you that by a great scientific discovery I have become wealthy, yes, *very* wealthy. That must suffice for now. We will leave here to remain away for an indefinite time; years may pass before we return, but meantime you shall want for nothing. I give you now a packet, in which you will find papers valued at over a million kronen——"

"Good heavens!—a million——" Mrs. Lindberg interrupted and sank on a chair, while Lindberg senior, the little hard working merchant who always had trouble in meeting his quarterly rent bill, trembled all over and rose, his teeth chattering.

"Is it true?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Convince yourself," Erik answered, "but listen to what I say. You must not deposit the money in a bank and draw interest, but invest it in good real estate and that in some distant place. The property of the Stejrbjholm family on the island Sejr can be purchased for a few hundred thousand kronen—it is, of course, on a somewhat secluded island, but that matters not. Buy this estate and live there. Summer will soon be here and you will not regret it. I will confide something to you; do you remember the financial panic during the time of Frederick VI, when the value of paper money sank down to zero? A similar crisis will recur in one of the next few years, but of much larger magnitude; in fact, it will affect the entire world, and gold coin itself will sink to almost nothing. I entrust this to you as a secret—do you understand? Therefore my counsel is: buy real estate."

Lindberg listened with bowed head, as though his life depended on his impressing each word on his mind. He asked no other questions, but was as though petrified. Mrs. Lindberg was the first to recover.

"Real estate owners we are to be then!" she joyfully exclaimed as she stepped up to Erik and laid both her hands on his head, kissing him. "You are a good man and I always said so," and to herself she added quietly: "A million! No; I cannot believe it! He has certainly discovered a new steam engine, one running without coal; a sort of perpetual motion machine—the kind my blessed father thought so much over. And now he will go to the United States to take out a patent on it."

* * * * *

When the young couple were alone that evening Erik grasped his wife's hand.

"My darling," he said, "we may now be obliged to face stormy times. Who knows what our fate will be in foreign lands? We must be prepared for everything. Please do not be angry, dear one, if I give you the choice between accompanying me and remaining with your parents, which might perhaps be safest, while I travel with my discovery to an uncertain fate, alone."

"Where you go, there I go," she replied, clasping her arms around his neck. "Do you believe that I could part from you? Positively not, now. We shared happy days, and we will share the unhappy; my place is by my husband's side."

* * * * *

On the morning, early, they boarded the express train for Berlin. While seated in the coupé, waiting for the train to leave, Erik had the unpleasant sensation of being closely watched. It appeared to him as though a pair of eyes were constantly upon him, but when he peered out into the mass of people crowding the station platform, he could discover nothing.

At the last moment a German commercial traveler, with his sample case, entered the coupé they were in and seated himself in a corner, where he began reading a book which he produced from his pocket. It struck Erik as strange that such a traveler could sport the means for first class accommodation. At last the train moved. At the stations the telegraph instruments ticked loudly and busily, and the telegraph poles appeared rapidly to slant by the travelers—faster and faster. Up in the air curled around the glass caps the dozens of wires were stretched, all leading out into that world, the head of which, like the gigantic idol in the dream of the king of Babylon, was of solid gold.

These wires were carrying a secret message to the governments of all nations: *There goes the man—the man who is determined to combat the mightiest potentate in the world.*

CHAPTER VI.—A CROWN REFUSED.

THE Poulsens wished to remain in Berlin for a few days, but they were almost certain from the very moment they arrived that they were under close surveillance. Not one moment did they feel themselves alone.

Whether it was really so, is open to question, but it seemed to them as though the very servants in the hotel measured them with suspecting glances. Perhaps they also knew of the presence of the police, as they were polite though reserved, and when Erik had placed his signature upon the hotel register, the proprietor closely scanned the same, apparently doubting its genuineness.

The next day he appeared at the door of Erik's room, knocked, and with a deep bow announced that a servant of the imperial chancellor had arrived with a letter awaiting a reply.

Erik hastily perused the lines :

I beg you for an interview today at 2 P.M.

Erik wrote :

I shall be there at the appointed time.

ERIK POULSEN.

The imperial chancellor received Erik in his private cabinet.

"Good morning, Mr. Poulsen, I am exceedingly glad to become acquainted with you. Be seated and let us immediately proceed to business. I wish to speak of your brilliant discovery. There can of course be no thought of making the matter public. The Danish government acted rather childishly in the affair, but so much the better. That gives me the opportunity to make you an offer in the name of the German nation: *sell us your discovery.*"

Erik looked startled.

"Naturally I do not think of offering you money—say, for instance, five hundred millions; but what do you think of the title of privy councilor and the highest Prussian order?"

Erik shrugged his shoulders. Privy councilor!

"Or count? Anything?" went on the chancellor, drumming impatiently with his fingers on the table.

Erik felt his pride asserting itself within him. He knew now what his value and importance was. What mattered that it was the powerful empire's chancellor with whom he spoke? Was he not his equal in power?

These were the thoughts in his mind as he replied, "I do not sell myself for a miserable title or for an equally miserable cross."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the minister angrily, and he hammered on the table with his fist; "you are very presumptuous! Notwithstanding, the discovery *must* be ours. Germany will make you the governing potentate over Bulgaria."

Erik started violently.

"Or king!"

Erik's eyes seemed suddenly to lose sight; everything around him turned black. King! A rain of fiery sparks seemed to fly by his dazzled eyes, and the blood sang in his ears. King! And his wife? Queen! He felt as though he must hold fast to something. The room whirled around him; it seemed to have turned bottom upwards; the ceiling seemed to be the floor, the floor the ceiling! And yet! Was his discovery worth no more than a kingdom? Would he not contaminate himself if he entered into such a bargain?

A chair noisily shoved recalled him to his surroundings, and he saw that the chancellor had arisen.

"No, you must not answer now—tomorrow or the day after, when you wish. Go home now; speak to your wife; we will meet again."

So saying, the chancellor bowed and left the room.

Erik went his way in a complete daze. He, the son of a mechanic, had had a crown offered to him! It was not a dream; he was actually walking the streets of Berlin, and had just left one of the great men of Europe, who had shaken hands with him in the friendliest manner, and offered him a throne.

If he stretched out his hand to take the scepter, however, it meant eternal silence in regard to his discovery, which would become the property of another. Germany would buy cannon therewith, and conquer the whole world. And when the whole world was made tributary to Germany, how could insignificant Bulgaria continue to exist? What was to prevent Germany from taking back what it had just presented to him?

Erik roused himself and straightened up. He looked about him, and saw the multitudes in carriages, on horseback and foot, streaming past him. Ah, now he saw it all clearly. These masses would gape at him open mouthed if he, the citizen, were to be placed on a throne. Such a thing had occurred before. But how quickly would it all be forgotten when the citizen was back in their ranks again! Who would know of him a hundred years hence? A few historians might perhaps tell the story on account of its peculiarity—how a German statesman, for a whim, made a low class citizen a king over an unimportant strip of land, and later, when the joke had gone far enough, struck the crown from his head; that would be all.

It took but little foresight to see to whom the arrangement would be most advantageous. But the chancellor was not to triumph. If history was to contain his—Erik Poulsen's—name, after a thousand years, he preferred to be chronicled as the man who had despised the offer of a crown.

Suddenly Erik felt some one tugging at his arm. His wife had started to meet him, being too nervous to wait for his return. She saw at once that something extraordinary had occurred.

"What did the chancellor wish?" she asked, falling into step with him.

Erik tried hard to appear calm and collected.

"He offered the throne of Bulgaria to me for my discovery," he replied with an assumed indifference. His wife gave one spasmodic tug at his arm, and stood still as though transfixed. She looked at him steadily.

"And what did you say?" she asked breathlessly.

"Nothing as yet; I wished to consider matters and talk them over with you. Perhaps he calculates that you, as a woman, will be vain enough to induce me to give an affirmative reply; but don't you think there is only one answer to make?"

"You mean—no?"

"Certainly."

She looked straight before her, preoccupied, while he explained his reasons for declining the offer. To refuse a crown was equal to taking one, and the kingdom of Bulgaria would certainly be a short lived joy. That could not

compare with the name and fame the future had in store for him, because whether he would or not—could he keep silent forever? Whatever offer the future might bring he would have only one answer. There was a ring in his words which also enthused his wife and caused her to look up to him admiringly. A new, overwhelming feeling of the responsibilities and the duties incumbent upon the wife of a great man, awakened within her.

The one whom she had chosen as master of her heart had been selected by fate for something still higher; to be the most powerful man in the world, because it had made him the master of the greatest power governing the world—*gold*! An emperor's crown was made of simple gold. On the day when he had penetrated the secret of that substance he himself became king, and now her heart bowed before him and she paid homage to him—her king.

Erik read her thoughts in her eyes, and on reaching the hotel sat down at the writing table to reply to the chancellor. He made no attempt at stating any reason for his negative answer, and his letter contained nothing else than a plain, short "No."

That same evening Erik and his wife prepared to leave the city. Their destination was an uncertainty to themselves as yet. There certainly was no good reason for staying one moment longer in Berlin, where every step they made was watched.

They had no cause to regret their prompt decision; they had hardly arisen the following morning when a police officer, in high standing apparently, knocked at their door and notified them that their presence in the city had been found "objectionable," and that they had been expelled from Prussia; they were told to leave Berlin within twelve hours.

"Berlin has also become *very* objectionable to me!" replied Erik, bowing stiffly to the officer, and straightway departed for Paris.

He now regretted that he had not at once proceeded there. If he had a fair chance anywhere to publicly announce his discovery, it would be in a free republic.

He and his wife were much pleased with the gay city. The peculiarly exhilarating air and the artistic traits of the populace, noticeable everywhere, even in the smallest details—all this captured him completely.

His intention was to visit Ducis, the renowned chemist, and editor of the *Journal Chimique*, to explain his discovery to him, and to beg him to publish the facts in his journal. Ducis was an apostle of science to the very finger tips, and if the world were to collapse over his head, he would be true to his vocation. If the news were once safe within the columns of that journal, which reached chemists the world over, then the gentlemen of the several European governments would, nilly willy, have to make the best of the dilemma.

Erik no longer felt himself to be under surveillance, and the next day after his arrival he was on his way to find Ducis. He expected to be received with open arms, and have all done that human power could do to remove the silly impediments placed in his way by others.

Here was the place; here resided the renowned man, to whom Erik had looked up for so many years. Now he was to meet his equal!

He reached for the bell, when he was interrupted by a gentleman with

bared head, who stepped up to him and said, "Pardon me, sir; do you wish to see Professor Ducis?"

"Yes," Erik replied in astonishment.

"And is your name Poulsen?"

Erik answered affirmatively again.

"Then I am obliged to ask you to follow me to the chief of police."

Otto M. Moeller.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HE WHO LAUGHED LAST.

A diamond cut diamond affair growing out of a meeting at Grizzly Bear Inn—An instance of many hands in the same game, and the complications that are the issue thereof.

A COLD, drizzling rain was falling, when we four, Matt Dodd, Ford Oakman, Walter Olcott, and myself drew rein in front of the Grizzly Bear Inn, the only lodging place at Blue Canyon, in western Montana. We were all civil engineers in the employ of the P. O. & Q. Railway, which was making vigorous efforts to establish connections with the Northern Pacific before the snow should fly. Oakman had been with the company from the beginning, and the necessity arising for more help, he was good enough to remember his old classmates. When my two companions and myself left the train at Rawlins' Bluff, Oakman was waiting there with four led horses, and we made the fifteen mile ride to Blue Canyon together.

Guests were not numerous at the Grizzly Bear; there was only one besides ourselves. He was Felix Tucker, a young fellow prospecting through that region with an ultimate purpose known only to himself. It took but little time, however, to discover that Tucker was a braggart of the first water. The yarns he told that evening around the roaring wood fire were marvels of invention.

He was in the middle of one of these recitals when the door opened to admit a veritable hayseed. He was a man in middle life, with a smooth, ruddy face, sandy hair, coarse clothing, and his trousers tucked in the tops of his cowhide boots. His face wore an expression of most verdant innocence, and he looked at us in a timid way. Finally fixing his eyes on Mr. Cuttle, he asked,

"Be you the landlord?"

"I am, sir; what can I do for you?"

"Kin you put me up for the night?"

"I reckon; where's your horse?"

"Hain't got none. Hoofed it all the way from Rattlesnake Gorge."

"Phew! That's a good twenty miles! Important business?"

"Well, sorter; I've come down to find out about the new railroad."

"You've come to the right spot; these four gentlemen"—indicating us—"are all connected with the road."

The newcomer glanced at each of us in turn, then doffing his hat made

an awkward bow. He sat down on the edge of the nearest chair, as if afraid he was taking too much liberty. A few minutes sufficed to put him at his ease, however, when he explained his business.

"You see, I heard tell," he began, "that the new road is going to cut purty close to Rattlesnake Gorge, where I own a piece of land. Do you reckon it'll make it worth more than it is now?"

Oakman assured him it undoubtedly would. The delight of Mr. Perkins, at hearing this, was childish in its exuberance.

Felix Tucker was irrepressible. The opportunity to make an impression could not be missed.

"Yes," he said, as if resuming an interrupted yarn, "it was last summer, as I was riding through Wolf Gulch, looking for a place to put up for the night, that Cinch Wadders and one of his gang leaped out from behind a rock, shouting 'Hands up!' They had the drop on me, and I lost no time reaching for the stars, but all the same I taught 'em a trick. Like a flash I snatched my revolver from my belt and let fly with two chambers. I think Cinch jumped three feet in the air, while his companion, with a howl of pain made off at headlong speed with Cinch at his heels——"

"Did you kill 'em both?" gasped the amazed Mr. Perkins, with open mouth and protruding eyes.

"I'm afraid I didn't, 'cause I've heard that Cinch and his gang are still in these párts."

Mr. Perkins sighed. "What a pity!"

The conversation continued until a late hour, then we four sought our beds and dreamed of Cinch Wadders and his gang.

At the end of the week Felix Tucker had become such a bore that we decided to teach him a lesson. One morning, I overheard him tell Mr. Cuttle that he was going back that day into the mountains on a prospecting tour, and did not expect to return until late at night. He intended to go on foot because a great part of the way was too rough for a horse to travel. I proposed to my friends that we should hold him up and put him in such a ridiculous plight that he would be glad to cease his intolerable bragging. My suggestion was eagerly accepted, and the simple plan of procedure arranged.

Several times during the day Oakman complained of an attack of rheumatism, and towards evening he seemed so much worse that we advised him not to go with us. Oakman showed keen disappointment, but reluctantly consented to stay behind.

As we three were about to start, Olcott said in an undertone,

"Poor Ford looks so bad I believe I'll keep him company."

"Do so," I replied, "Matt and I can manage Tucker."

Not quite an hour later Felix Tucker was striding along the old Black-foot Trail on his return to the Grizzly Bear.

"Hands up!" suddenly sounded from the depths of the woods on his right. He stopped instantly and his hands were promptly elevated.

"Gentlemen," he said in a faltering voice, as he saw two dim figures approaching, "take all I have, but please don't kill me!"

"Go through him, Bill, while I keep him covered," commanded Matt in a disguised voice.

"All right, Cinch," I replied.

Tucker shuddered and nearly dropped when he heard the name of the terrible desperado. I did not have to tell him twice, after appropriating a fat wallet and his watch, to make himself scarce. He dashed off on a dead run, straight for the Grizzly Bear.

We could scarcely wait until he was beyond hearing before we burst out laughing.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" I asked, when I could control my voice. "He had his revolver all the time in his hip pocket, and yet he was as meek as a lamb."

"When we return his things to him," added Matt, "and let him know the particulars of——"

"*Hands up!*"

The thunderclap sounded at my very elbow, and in the dusk we saw three men covering us with leveled Winchesters.

"You're done up this time, Cinch! Just march along, and step lively, too!"

"I assure you there is some mistake here," I hastened to say. "This is only a joke——"

"A sorry joke it will be for you! Hand over your plunder, and not a word! You hear me!"

I tremblingly passed over the watch, and Matt did the same with the purse. The tables were turned with a vengeance! Our captors were in deadly earnest. We were evidently mistaken for Cinch Wadders and one of his men, and even though we could prove otherwise, we could not deny that we had held up and robbed an innocent person. While the sheriff, as he undoubtedly was, did the talking, his deputies remained silent in the background.

Mute, dejected, and despairing, we tramped down the trail in front of our guards. When were about half way to the Grizzly Bear the sheriff called out in a sharp voice,

"Halt!"

We obeyed, not daring to look around.

"I'll be gone only a minute," he continued. "I left the handcuffs at the Grizzly Bear. Keep 'em covered till I get back."

The sheriff strode past us, and quickly vanished in the gloom. About five minutes later I heard a laugh! There was no mistaking from whence it came. I would have known it among a thousand. It was Ford Oakman's!

Matt and I instantly turned our heads. Oakman and Olcott came forward, their weapons lowered. They were fairly convulsed with mirth.

"Not a word," said I. "You've played it well for a sick man, Ford. It's on us! Let's adjourn to the Grizzly Bear."

"Any way," said Matt, "we've got it on Tucker."

"But who was the sheriff?" I asked.

"Why, Perkins, the hayseed."

"Well, he is a born actor."

"It cost us five dollars and several rehearsals to get him up to the right key. But he was worth it," replied Oakman. "What's become of him, though?" he continued. "What was he up to when he spoke about the handcuffs?"

"I reckon he is waiting for us at the inn. Let's join him," suggested Olcott.

We hurried to the Grizzly Bear, and when we entered the bar room, Felix Tucker was in the midst of a flamboyant account of his experience with a half dozen outlaws. One look at our slouch hats and turned up coat collars told him the truth. A ghastly smile lit up his face, and he said weakly, "Well, now, I suspected you, Hildreth, all the time."

Then Oakman related with much gusto the trick played on us in turn.

"Which reminds me," interrupted Olcott. "Where in the dickens is Perkins?"

An odd expression came over the face of landlord Cattle as he asked for further particulars. When he had heard the whole story he said, "Gentlemen, the right name of that verdant countryman you call Mr. Perkins is Cinch Wadders! I suspected him the other night when he first came here; he saw it, and warned me not to give him away; and, as he promised me he would do no harm to you, I did not feel bad about keeping his secret. I reckon it's good by purse and watch!"

When we had recovered from our amazement, I turned to Tucker.

"Since you have lost your property through our doings, we can do no less than make it good to you."

Then it was Tucker's turn to add the last straw.

"My friends, I am not quite the fool I may look. I knew I was likely to run against Cinch Wadders in these parts at any time, so I prepared myself by carrying a brass watch and a purse padded with papers of no value."

All of which suggests the question whether, after all, it was not Tucker who laughed last?

H. L. Ellinger.

THE FOX HUNTER.

As forth he rides, he turns his head,
 And waves a last good by;
 And the gallant hunter's fair young wife,
 Can scarce restrain a sigh.
 "'Tis not the danger of the chase
 I fear for him," she cried;
 "His horse is strong and sure of foot,
 And he is skilled to ride.
 "But oh—and when I think of it
 My heart is in my throat—
 I fear that some bad, wicked boy
 Will stone his bright red coat!"

THE RIVER OF DARKNESS.*

A record of some marvelous experiences in the Dark Continent—Why a water journey beneath the earth's surface was undertaken at frightful risks—A voyage on a raft along an unknown course and without the possibility of retreat.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

GUY CHUTNEY, an officer in the British army, on his way back to service in India, is asked to stop off at Aden and take important despatches to Sir Arthur Ashby, governor of Zaila, on the African coast. En route the steamer touches at Berbera, where the great annual fair is being held. Here Chutney rescues from death Makar Makalo, by shooting a leopard whose slumbers the Arab had unwittingly disturbed, and a few minutes later he meets an old friend, Melton Forbes, foreign correspondent of an English newspaper. Suspecting that there is treachery in the wind, Forbes sends his native servant Momba through the town to investigate, who soon after returns pursued by a mob of Somali warriors. It appears that Manuel Torres, a Portuguese fellow passenger of Guy's on the Aden steamer, and whom he suspects of reading his despatches, has brought rifles to Makar Makalo, who is instituting rebellion against the English on behalf of Rao Khan, Emir of Harar.

Melton with his servant, accompanies Guy to Zaila, and at the residency they find Sir Arthur drinking champagne with Colonel Carrington. Their report carries consternation to the breast of the governor, who thinks of seeking safety on board the steamer. But it is too late; the Arabs are already swarming about the place, the Englishmen are all made prisoners, and doomed by Makar Makalo to be sent as slaves to the Somalis of the Galla country.

CHAPTER VII.—SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

THE party were taken to a rear apartment of the residency, and placed under strong guard. During the remainder of that night no one slept, of course, nor did they hold much conversation, for all instinctively avoided a subject which could only add to their wretchedness.

Slavery among the Somalis was a fate worse than death. It was a living death indeed, for hope of escape there was none. Far better if Makar had ordered them to be shot at daybreak.

Guy spoke hopefully to Melton of the situation, counting somewhat on the claim he had on Makar; but Melton seemed to think that the Arab had ignored the affair, and would not interfere with Guy's fate.

All too soon gray dawn came stealing into the residency, revealing the haggard faces of the captives, and with it came a summons from Makar to prepare for the journey. Food was brought, and partaken of with some relish, for, under even the most distressing circumstances, men seem able to eat. Closely watched, they were led into the open air, and halted for a brief space in the court.

The sun was not up yet, and the blue waters of the gulf stretched afar

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until lost in the pale mist. In the harbor lay the two steamers, but the British flag no longer floated over their decks.

Finally they were led through a curious rabble of Arabs and Somalis to the outskirts of the town, where the caravan was in process of formation. It was no ordinary caravan. There were no bales of goods lying about, no camels laden down with burdens, but surrounded by many of the population drawn hither by curiosity were about fifty camels with simple trappings, and a group of Somalis and Arabs all heavily armed, the Arabs with rifles, the natives with long spears.

Simultaneously with the arrival of the captives, Makar made his appearance with an armed escort, and proceeded to hold a close conversation with the two Arabs who seemed to be the leaders of the caravan. He spoke earnestly for quite a while, making many gestures, and pointing from time to time at the prisoners. Then he turned away, and instantly all was excitement.

The Arabs and Somalis quickly pulled themselves upon their camels, and with the aid of the guards the Englishmen were mounted in the same way, each man being hoisted up beside an Arab or a Somali.

No resistance was made. The Hindoo soldiers were in a state of deep dejection, and poor Sir Arthur seemed hardly to realize his position.

The caravan was now ready to start. At the last minute Makar Makalo passed carelessly by Guy and whispered, "Keep good heart. Makar no forget." Then he vanished in the crowd, and, with a loud cheer to speed them on their way, the line of camels filed at a slow trot over the sandy plain in a southwesterly direction.

Guy turned his head for a last look at Zaila and the harbor, now beginning to glimmer in the first rays of the sun, and then a stretch of sand hills hid the town from view.

Little did he realize that which he must pass through before he saw the coast again.

From the ruined fortifications of the town an unseen observer watched the departure of the caravan. It was Manuel Torres. The crafty Portuguese was well pleased to see the hated Englishmen speeding away to their doom.

He was a cunning knave and had laid his plans well. Perhaps he feared the stability of the new government. If the English came into possession of Zaila again, he could invent some clever tale to disprove his connection with the Arab revolt; and who could bear witness against him? None, indeed, for the lips of those who alone knew his guilt would be hopelessly sealed. Africa never gives up her slaves.

To the wretched captives that day's journey over the scorching desert was a fearful experience. Nothing is more painful to the novice than riding camel back, and when at last a halt was made at sunset every man was aching from head to foot.

The heat, too, had been fearful, though the Arabs had provided them with big sun helmets before starting. No intercourse was permitted. The captives were kept rigorously apart. But little sleep was allowed. The

caravan started again before dawn, and, as before, traveled rapidly and steadily until sundown.

At the end of the second day they had become in a measure accustomed to the motion of the camels, and no longer suffered as much. Yet in all this time no words had been exchanged. Each man was kept apart. The Arab with whom Guy rode could speak some English, and from him he learned that the chief object of the caravan was to carry to Rao Khan the news of the capture of Zaila. Further information the Arab refused to give.

The caravan comprised a dozen Arabs and thirty or forty Somalis of the Galla country. It was to these crafty savages that the captives belonged. The Somalis had assisted Makar in the revolt, and these slaves were their reward. Their chief, who accompanied the caravan, was none other than Guy's vindictive enemy, Oko Sam.

Late in the afternoon of the fifth day the caravan came to a sudden halt. In the distance were visible green hills and rolling plains covered with verdure. The desert seemed to have ended. It was evident that something of importance was about to happen.

All dismounted, and while the Arabs and Somalis entered into an excited conversation, the captives were for the first time allowed to converse.

Their hopeless situation was too well understood for discussion. Strange to say, Sir Arthur was the only one who had not abandoned hope.

"The government will save us," he repeated gloomily. "They will send an army into the interior."

No one ventured to dispute this assertion. They talked in low tones of their probable destination, and regarded with some uneasiness the conference going on among the Arabs, which had now assumed a more excitable phase.

"They are quarreling over something," said Guy. "Why do you suppose they have stopped here?"

"I don't know," replied Melton, "unless they intend to separate, the Arabs going on to Harar, the Somalis to their own country, which lies to the south of Harar."

Melton's theory was very plausible, but before any one could reply the conference terminated suddenly, and the Arabs, drawing apart, came quickly up to the captives and laying hold of Sir Arthur and the colonel, led them over to the Somalis.

This was repeated with Momba, Captain Waller, and the Hindoo soldiers, but to their surprise Guy and Melton were ordered to remain where they were.

Foremost among the Somalis stood Oko Sam, his leopard skin dangling about his loins, and a fiendish expression on his face.

He advanced a step or two, talking fiercely, and pointing with his spear to Guy and Melton. The Arab leader strode out toward him, and cried in a loud voice, "Makar has ordered it. The two white men must go to Harar."

Scarce had the words left his lips when the Somali chief poised his spear and hurled it forward with such force and accuracy of aim that it passed through the Arab's body and the point came out at the back. With a cry he dropped on the sand.

A second of terrible suspense followed, and then snatching another spear from one of his followers, the maddened Somali leaped furiously at Guy, who unfortunately was standing directly in his path.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE SEPARATION.

BUT help was at hand. Before Oko Sam could reach his victim, an Arab directly behind Guy fired, and the fellow stumbled blindly on the sand.

A shout of rage burst from the Somalis, and, hastily pushing their captives to the rear, they advanced in a very ugly manner, shaking their long spears.

Leaving the dead Arab and the wounded Somali where they had fallen, the Arabs moved back a short distance, taking Guy and Melton with them, and shouted to the Somalis to remain where they were.

The Arabs were reluctant to fire, and would have avoided further bloodshed, but the enraged savages continued to press forward, and finally let fly a shower of spears that wounded one of the Arabs, and unfortunately killed a camel. The Arabs at once retaliated with a rifle volley, and to such good effect that three or four of the Somalis were killed.

This brought them to their senses. Their spears could not compete with the firearms of the Arabs. They moved back to their animals, and, with a few farewell shouts of vengeance, rode away to the south, while the Arabs hastily bestrode their camels, and, taking the two Englishmen with them, calmly resumed their journey to the southwest.

For a time the two caravans, moving on the sides of an acute angle, as it were, remained close together; but, gradually diverging, the sharp outlines of the Somalis began to fade into the twilight, and at last, as Guy and Melton strained their tear dimmed eyes into the distance, the shadows obliterated the last traces of their captive friends. To Momba Melton had been deeply attached, and their separation was a hard blow.

And now a terrible feeling of desolation came over them, and they were half inclined to wish that they, too, had been led away to share the fate of Sir Arthur and the colonel.

Though it was now fast growing dark, the Arabs evinced no intention of stopping. With long, sweeping strides the unwearied camels swept over the sandy plain, and their riders from time to time spurred them to greater speed.

Melton was back in the rear, but Guy rode in front, with the Arab who had assumed the leadership since the death of his companion.

Guy ventured to address him, and was surprised to find him grown somewhat communicative. He explained to Guy in broken English that by Makar's orders he and Melton were to be delivered up to Rao Khan instead of being sent into slavery among the Somalis. Harar, he said, was a day's journey away, and by traveling all night they would arrive at sunrise. His account of Rao Khan, the Emir, was by no means reassuring, but Guy did not allow this to trouble him much. Makar's last words were still ringing in his ears, and he felt certain that their deliverance from the Somalis was the first step toward the fulfilment of Makar's promise.

The little caravan moved on in silence. The Arabs were probably uneasy. They may have feared an attack from the Somalis or some other foe, for they kept a close watch, and held their rifles in constant readiness. But presently the moon came up in the east, casting a pale glamour over the desert, and tracing on the sand in weird, fantastic designs the shadows of the camels and their riders.

As the night wore on the Arabs relaxed their caution, and, dropping their rifles to their sides, began to refresh themselves with crackers brought along from Zaila, together with dates and figs, which they washed down with water.

The Arab with whom Melton was mounted now rode up beside the leader, and, to their great joy, Guy and Melton were permitted to converse. Though they had had no rest or sleep since the previous night, excitement had driven away all fatigue, and they looked forward with deep interest to their arrival at Harar.

To Guy's surprise, Melton did not believe that he had been singled out to accompany Guy.

"No, no, Chutney," he said, "depend upon it, Makar has some other object in view. I believe now that he will effect your escape in some way, but don't be surprised to find yourself sent back to Zaila alone. Makar's clemency will be extended to no one but yourself."

"Nonsense," returned Guy. "I tell you he means to save you, too. However, we shall not be parted, Melton. I assure you of that. I will accept no deliverance that does not include you, too."

Forbes made no reply, and for a time they rode on in silence. Absorbed in conversation, they had failed to observe that the aspect of the country had begun to change. They were now ascending a slight ridge, and from its crest could be seen the vague outline of mountains on both the right and the left, while all around them, in place of the dreary sand, were low bushes and vegetation. The camel's thorn and tamarisk shrub of the desert had disappeared. Once some huge animal glided across their path and one of the Arabs half raised his rifle, but lowered it again.

With feelings which they would have found it hard to express, Guy and Melton saw the dawn come creeping over the sky, and just as it became fully light, they rode over the crest of a hill and perceived in the distance a mass of walls and turrets stamped against the pale gray sky.

A pleasant breeze blew from the mountains which rose steep and rocky on all sides, while the valleys were richly wooded, and a silver thread, curving to and fro, marked the presence of a hillside stream.

The little caravan now descended into a narrow gorge and traveled rapidly along the course of a brawling torrent for nearly an hour. Then crossing the stream, they rounded a sharp spur of rocks, and the dreaded city of Harar was before them.

Thirty years before the intrepid Burton had penetrated to that hotbed of fanaticism, and had by a miracle come back alive. From that day to this none had dared to emulate him.

Well might the two young Englishmen shrink from meeting that detestable

despot, Rao Khan, who ruled his people by the sword, and hated all Christians with hatred that fanaticism alone can breed.

The caravan ascended the hill and across the brow of the ridge stretched the massive, irregular wall of the town. The great brazen gates were closed and in the oval turrets that rose sentinel-like above the wall, appeared no sign of life or motion.

Then with startling suddenness came a trumpet blast and the quick, sharp roll of drums; and from the town burst a tumult and volume of sound, and then over the walls, and peering curiously from the turrets, appeared a swarm of dark, repulsive faces.

The tumult deepened and changed to one vast murmur as the caravan moved in dignified state up to the very gates of the ancient city of Harar.

CHAPTER IX.—A CLOSE SHAVE.

A BRIEF pause, then the gates swung on creaking hinges and the caravan filed in between the dingy walls that had reared themselves from the summit of that hill for centuries.

For an instant a hush of curiosity fell on the multitude within, as the caravan appeared, but as the Arab leader suddenly flung to the breeze the English flag that had once floated from the fortifications of Zaila, a great shout arose, so that the very air seemed to tremble, and the people pressed tumultuously on the caravan from all sides.

"Zaila has fallen! Zaila has fallen!" they cried, and wild with joy, they flung their arms in the air, while those in the rear sought the housetops the better to see the new arrivals.

In the first excitement Guy and Melton had escaped notice, but now they were suddenly spied, and the sight of the two hated Englishmen roused the passions to the highest pitch of ferocity. The foreigners' presence in the town was a sacrilege, an insult, and with threats and angry cries the mob surged round the group. At last so great was the crush, the camels were forced to halt.

"Kill the infidels! Kill the dogs of unbelievers!" howled the multitude, and waxing more furious with every shout, they drew daggers and knives and raised their spears.

The Arabs had quietly closed round Guy and Melton, forming with their camels a protective circle, and this alone saved the Englishmen from death. But every instant the situation was becoming more critical. The mob grew bolder, and even tried to force the group apart in spite of the protestations of the Arabs, who had begun to point their rifles threateningly. Hundreds of savage faces glared unutterable hatred at the two strangers, hundreds of wretches were thirsting for their blood, and, finally roused to uncontrollable fury, the crowd swept impetuously against the caravan from all sides.

The frightened camels pranced and reared, and the cordon of defense suddenly broken, a dozen savages rushed on Guy and Melton. A long spear pierced Forbes under the arm and down he went beneath the camels.

A burly wretch dashed at Guy with a dagger, but the Arab brought

down the butt of his rifle on the fellow's head just in time, and he dropped like a log.

The man behind hurled his spear, but his aim was poor, and instead of striking Guy, it entered the poor camel's neck, and the beast, plunging madly forward, hurled Guy and the Arab to the ground.

This alone saved their lives. As Guy staggered to his feet, cries of quite a different nature burst from the mob, and in fright and panic they began to scatter in all directions. The rattle of musketry broke out some distance ahead, and the Arabs, joining in eagerly, began to empty their rifles into the fleeing mass.

The Englishmen were saved. A compact body of men in linen tunics and leopard skin caps came sweeping forward. They were armed with rifles, and as they ran they kept shooting into the struggling crowd which was shrieking and groaning with agony.

In five minutes the place was deserted and the stony ground was literally covered with bodies. It was a terrible example of Rao Khan's despotic rule.

Melton was lifted up and to Guy's deep sorrow it was seen that he had received an ugly thrust along the side, not of a serious nature, but ragged and painful.

Two of the Emir's troopers, for such they proved to be, carried him, for he was unable to walk or ride.

Guy and the Arab mounted a fresh camel, first putting the wounded animal out of his misery, and then, preceded by the Emir's guard, the caravan resumed its march up the street.

The first sight of Harar was novel and interesting. Before them was a long avenue, fully a mile in length, at the extreme end of which could be dimly seen the northern wall of the town. This avenue was like a barren mountain road, strewn with rubbish and heaps of rocks, and the dwellings which rose on all sides to the height of two stories, were, many of them, constructed of sandstone and granite, cemented with a reddish clay. They were impressively gloomy and dingy.

The terrible scene just enacted had terrorized the people. Many Arabs came flocking across the streets and exchanged greetings with the newcomers, but very few Somalis or Gallas were to be seen. The sight of the Emir's guard seemed to have stricken the town like a palsy. The shops and booths were closed and deserted. The curtains of the houses were closely drawn; here and there at the doors lay goods that had been dropped in the sudden panic, and at one place a man lay dead across the threshold still clutching in his stiffened fingers a bunch of brightly colored rugs.

But now the scene became animated and lively; people flocked out from their houses, among them many women, whom Guy regarded curiously, for they seemed to be of quite a different type from the men, and passably good looking. They made no demonstration, however, but very quietly followed the caravan.

The center of the town was now close at hand, and a short distance ahead, on the left hand side, rose a more imposing abode than those around it. It was built of granite, and above the flat roof rose a square tower with

circular windows. It boasted a spacious courtyard, inclosed by a low stone parapet, and within this space were a dozen armed guards, clad in leopard skin caps, and bearing brightly polished rifles.

It was the palace of the Emir, and as the caravan drew up to the gates the escort sounded a blast of trumpets, and almost immediately the doors were opened and a grave and dignified Arab came slowly out.

He spoke a few words to the leader of the caravan, who dismounted at once, and bidding Guy follow him, entered the courtyard. Close behind him came Melton, borne by the soldiers.

Passing between the guards, they entered a narrow vestibule hung with rich curtains, and in a moment more were ushered into the dreaded presence of Rao Khan.

The Emir was seated on a low dais at the further side of a spacious apartment. The first glance struck terror to Guy's heart. Rao Khan was a short, thickset man, with a round, smooth face. His eyes were sunken deeply under the forehead, and the expression of his face was a strange blending of brutality, avarice, and treachery. He was simply clad in white linen, with a great sword at his side, and on his head was a leopard skin cap, so constructed that the tail of the leopard hung down his back.

Before him squatted four solemn faced Arabs. The floor was spread with rugs and the skins of various animals, and on the heavily curtained walls hung a dazzling array of every description, bronze and copper shields, and strips of oddly woven tapestry. At sight of the English flag which the Arab now produced, the Emir's eyes sparkled, his face lit up with fiendish joy, and he began to talk wildly in a strange tongue.

The Arab replied, giving him no doubt an account of the insurrection, for the names Berbera, Zaila, and Makar Makalo were frequently mentioned.

Guy, from his position at Melton's side, who had been placed on a soft lion skin, watched the strange scene with wonder. He was more worried at present about Melton than anything else. The spear wound had not yet been dressed, and the poor fellow was in too much pain even to talk.

At last the Arab turned round, and, pointing to the Englishmen, spoke in a low tone to the Emir, who half rose from his seat and looked sharply at the captives.

Guy met his gaze calmly and steadily. In a moment the suspense would be over, and their fate would be decided one way or the other.

CHAPTER X.—THE SLAVE PRISON.

THE Emir's reply was brief and apparently forcible. He clapped his hands, and half a dozen soldiers appeared instantly. He addressed them with a word or two, but before they could execute his orders, Guy hastened forward and said to the Arab, "I pray you have my friend's wound dressed. He is suffering much pain."

The Arab addressed the Emir, pointing to the wounded man, and then turning to Guy he said, "It is well. Rao Khan will see to the Inglis man."

Guy would have sought more information, but the soldiers now came for-

ward, and picking Melton up, motioned Guy to follow them. They passed out of the apartment by a rear door, and traversing a long hall, entered a big courtyard.

On the right and left were high stone walls, and directly opposite was a low, gloomy sandstone structure, with one narrow door opening on the court.

Here were standing more armed guards, who obsequiously opened the door for the approaching captives.

As they passed through the gloomy portal Guy's heart sank. His eyes at first could see nothing but darkness, and he blindly followed his conductors until they came to a stop. A heavy door was closed and bolted behind him, and then all was silent.

In a few seconds he was able to see his surroundings. He was in a square dungeon, lighted by a narrow aperture high up in the wall. The floor was of stone, strewn with straw. Melton sat up and leaned against the wall.

"Where are we, Chutney?" he asked.

"I don't know," answered Guy; "in some sort of a prison, I suppose. Why—hello, Melton, here are iron rings sunk in the floor all along the side."

"That settles it, then," rejoined Melton. "This is Rao Khan's slave prison. I don't suppose there are many inmates now while the fair is going on."

Approaching footsteps put an end to the conversation, and in a moment the door opened to admit a tall Arab, followed by a native with bandages and a basin of water.

The Arab quietly loosened Melton's shirt and coat, and washing the wound, wrapped bandages round his body spread with some soft ointment. He did the work speedily and dexterously, and then departed as silently as he had come. He had barely gone, however, when a soldier entered with a tray containing dates, figs, and a peculiar kind of cakes, which he placed before the prisoners. They ate with relish, and then overcome by weariness, they lay down on the straw and fell asleep.

It was some hours later when Guy woke. Night had come, for no light shone through the aperture. He lay for some time listening to Melton's deep breathing and thinking of their terrible situation.

He was not without hope of deliverance, for he placed a great deal of faith in Makai's promise; yet even then the chances were against them. Perhaps at this very moment Zaila had been retaken, and Makar was killed or a prisoner. If this should happen they were lost. Guy shuddered to think of Rao Khan's vengeance under such circumstances.

Presently he became aware of vague noises somewhere in the distance. He fancied he heard shots fired and a loud tumult of voices.

He thought it might be imagination, but suddenly the sounds increased, and once or twice footsteps hurried past the dungeon. The noise now woke Melton, and together they listened, convinced that it was a presentiment of coming evil. The strange sounds rose and fell, at times nearly dying away and then bursting out with renewed violence.

"I can't understand it at all," said Guy. "It can't be a rejoicing over the capture of Zaila, for they are plainly cries of anger."

"We'll know pretty soon what it means," returned Melton; "it concerns us, you may be sure."

In his excitement he rose and began to pace the floor. His wound was giving him no pain, he said, adding that he really felt pretty well again.

At last the shouts seemed to come a little nearer, and before long the fierce, angry cries were heard close at hand.

"They are surrounding the prison," said Guy huskily.

He was right. A howling mob was on all sides of them now, and it was quite clear that they were beginning to attack the walls of the courtyard, for suddenly half a dozen shots were fired as though the guards were resisting the invaders.

It was a period of terrible suspense. The shouts increased, the firing grew heavier, powder smoke drifted into the prison, and just when they expected to see their dungeon door torn open by a mad swarm of fanatics, the uproar suddenly ceased.

A full minute of silence followed, and then on the night air rose a howl of triumph, so savage, so vindictive, that Guy and Melton shivered from head to foot. For some reason the attack had been suddenly abandoned. What that reason was they could only surmise.

The silence continued. The invaders had dispersed. Sleep was impossible, and they passed the time in conversation until a streak of light, flickering through the opening, showed that morning had come.

Food and drink were brought in. The prisoners ate sparingly. The shadow of a great calamity was overhanging.

"I am just as sure," said Melton, "that something will shortly happen, as I am that you and I are in Rao Khan's slave prison at Harar."

"Listen," answered Guy.

Footsteps approached. The door creaked and opened, and a man entered. With a cry of wonder Guy and Melton sprang to their feet. The newcomer was bronzed and burnt, he had light hair, a mustache and a soft blond beard, but he wore trousers and a tunic of white linen.

The surprise was mutual. The stranger scanned them closely from head to foot.

"Who are you?" cried Guy hoarsely. "Can it be possible that you are an Englishman—an Englishman in Harar?"

The man paused a moment and then said quietly, "I am a Greek. My name is Canaris Mataplan. At present I am interpreter to Rao Khan, the Emir."

"But your English?" cried Melton. "It is perfect."

"I was a café keeper at Cairo for seven years," replied the Greek. "I learned English there."

An embarrassing pause now occurred. It was certain that the Greek was the bearer of tidings from the Emir. No one dared speak. At last the Greek said quietly, "You are truly unfortunate. Tell me how you came here. I know that Zaila has fallen into the possession of Rao Khan's emissaries. I know nothing else."

Guy briefly told the tale and Canaris listened silently.

"Fools !" he said. "The English will be in Zaila again in a month."

"And you?" rejoined Guy. "What brought you to Harar?"

"I left Cairo for Calcutta," said Canaris. "The steamer was lost off Cape Guardafui; ten of us reached shore in a boat; the Somalis slaughtered all but myself. I was sold to the Arabs and came ultimately to Harar. I was useful to Rao Khan in many ways, and my life was spared. I have been here two years, two long years. I shall never see Greece again," he added gloomily. "I am a slave to the Emir for life."

"Is escape then impossible?" asked Guy.

"Absolutely. Between here and the coast is the desert. Starvation or death by wild beasts awaits a fugitive there. To the south are the blood-thirsty Gallas. No, no; one can never escape from Harar."

The tramp of the guard was heard in the corridor, and a sudden change passed over the Greek's face.

"I have come from Rao Khan," he said in a low voice. "He sends me with a message."

He paused.

"Go on," said Guy, "we are listening." He was breathing heavily.

"Two hours after you arrived here yesterday morning," resumed Canaris, "Rao Khan despatched the Arabs to Zaila again, in company with two hundred of his best soldiers, who will assist in holding the town. They had scarcely gone when an insurrection broke out. The people were angered at the slaughter done by the Emir's troops when they rescued you from the crowd. It is a law of ancient standing in Harar that every Christian stranger who enters her gates must die. Englishmen are most detested of all. The populace became maddened and furious; from all quarters of the town they came, clamoring, demanding your lives. When Rao Khan called out his remaining troops they refused to fire. The people, they said, were right. A very few remained faithful to the Emir. The mob surrounded the palace and the prison; they tried to scale the walls; the guards in the court fired on them. Then Rao Khan appeared and spoke to the angry crowd. He begged them to wait. He told them that you belonged not to him, but that Makar Makalo had sent you here for safe keeping, that you were the slaves of Makar Makalo. The people only howled in derision. They became more angry and infuriated, and refused to listen any longer. 'The Englishmen must die!' they cried. Rao Khan was fearful in his anger. But he was powerless. He feared the destruction of the palace, the loss of his own life." Here Canaris paused and looked with infinite pity at the Englishmen.

Guy tried to speak, but the words stuck in his throat. Melton laid his hand on the Greek's arm. "Go on, go on," he whispered hoarsely. "We are men, not cowards. Let us know the worst."

CHAPTER XI.—CANARIS UNFOLDS A TALE.

"WELL," said Canaris, "I will tell you. Rao Khan has promised your lives to the people. It was his only hope, and now, his word once given, he will not dare to break it."

Melton covered his face with his hands, and Guy staggered backward.

"When?" he cried huskily. "Today?"

"No," said Canaris, "not today. The Emir bids me tell you, that you will have four days yet to live. On the fifth day you will die by the executioner, in the square of the town."

They shuddered as these dreadful words fell from the Greek's lips.

"Is there no hope then at all?" said Melton. "Let us know the worst at once and be done with it."

Canaris made no reply for a moment. His eyes were fixed on the floor and he seemed to be thinking deeply. When he looked up the expression of his face was changed. A strange light shone in his eye, a mixture of triumph and fear.

"I can tell you nothing now," he said hastily. "Tonight you shall have an answer. But tell me, how is your wound?"

"Better," replied Melton. "I scarcely feel it at all."

"Good," said Canaris. "Now do just as I tell you. Lie down on the straw; pretend that you are much worse; moan loudly from time to time, and when I come tonight I shall have something to impart to you."

With this strange admonition, Canaris hastily left the dungeon and the guard rebolted the door.

"Is the fellow crazy?" said Melton. "What can he mean to do?"

"Crazy?" rejoined Guy. "No; I have a strange faith in that man, Melton. Do just as he tells you and see what turns up tonight."

With much grumbling Melton assumed the part of a very sick man. He rather overdid the thing in fact, for twice the guard opened the door and looked in. About noon food was brought, and from that time no one came near them.

The minutes dragged along like hours. They tried to forget the awful fate that stared them in the face, but in spite of the Greek's encouraging words, the future looked very black.

At last the feeble light in their dungeon began to fade away, and soon they were in darkness.

"The fellow will never come back," said Melton bitterly. "It's all up with us, Chutney, so don't try to raise any more false hopes."

But Guy refused to give up and his faith was rewarded. Quick footsteps approached the dungeon, the bolts rattled, and Canaris entered with a rude lamp and a leather case which he placed carefully on the floor.

Then he pulled a paper from his pocket and waved it gleefully.

"See," he cried, "a permit from Rao Khan, admitting me to the prison at all times. I told him that your wound was very bad, that the Arab doctor had failed to help you, and that I knew enough of English surgery to cure you, if he would allow it. Rao Khan reluctantly consented, and here I am."

He listened intently for a moment, glanced round the dungeon, and then went on in a low, excited tone:

"Get close together. I have something important to tell you."

They squatted down in a group on the straw, and with a strange, exultant sparkle in his eyes, Canaris began:

"When I came to Harar two years ago, this very cell held a white slave, like yourselves an Englishman. He was an old man, with long white hair and beard, and had been so long in slavery that he had forgotten his own name and could scarcely speak the English tongue.

"My duties then were to carry food and drink to the slaves, and before long I was on intimate terms with the old Englishman. He was very ill, and the Arab doctors made him no better. Perhaps it was old age that was the trouble, but at all events he died two months after I came. At different times he had told me the story of his life, and that is what I am going to tell you now.

"He had been thirty years in slavery. How and where he had been captured he could no longer remember. His mind was a blank on that point. But one thing he told me that is important. For twenty years he had lived among the Gallas in a village fifty miles to the south of Harar, and it was a few years after he had been brought there that he nearly succeeded in making his escape.

"He had often heard from the natives of an underground river that was said to exist, and which emptied either into the River Juba or into the sea. The tales concerning the river were many and strange, but the chief of the Gallas assured him that at one time a tribe of natives had lived in the mouth of a huge cavern which gave access to the river."

"I have heard something of that myself," interrupted Melton. "An Arab at Zanzibar told me, but I never had any faith in the story."

"That river exists," said Canaris solemnly. "The Englishman found it."

"What!" cried Guy and Melton in one breath. "He found the underground river?"

"Yes, he discovered it," resumed Canaris. "He found it one day while hunting a concealed cavern. He ventured down and came to a great sandy beach, past which flowed swiftly a broad stream. On the beach lay half a dozen strong canoes with paddles. All this he saw by the light that streamed in from narrow crevices overhead. He went back to the village and began to lay aside provisions for the journey, for he intended making his escape by the river. In a week all was ready. He had concealed near the cavern supplies for a long voyage. The very day fixed for his escape he was sold to a Galla chief who lived twenty miles distant. In the years that followed he made many attempts to escape, but on every occasion was captured and brought back. At last he was given as tribute to the Emir by this Galla chief, and here in this dungeon, on the spot you are sitting on now, he breathed his last."

Canaris paused and helped himself to a glass of water.

"A strange story, indeed," said Guy, "but what has it got to do with us?"

"I will tell you," responded Canaris, with a slight tremor in his voice. "It may have nothing to do with any of us, and it may be of the greatest importance to us all."

"Did the old man tell you where to find the cavern?" asked Guy.

"No," answered Canaris, "but before he died he gave me this;" and pulling a folded bit of linen from his pocket he handed it to Guy.

"Can you read that?" he asked in strange excitement. "I have never been able to make anything out of it."

Guy pulled it carefully open and gazed with interest on the faded characters that had apparently been written in blood.

"Yes," he said after a pause, "I can read it. It is French."

"Go on," said Canaris. "Tell me quickly what it is."

"It translates as follows," rejoined Guy:

Half way between Elephant Peak and the Lion's Head. The south side of the stone kraal. The rock with the cross.

Canaris sprang to his feet and staggered back against the wall of the dungeon.

"It was providence that brought you here," he cried. "It is wonderful, wonderful."

"What do you mean?" said Guy. "How can this aid us?"

"It is the secret of the cave," replied Canaris. "The stone kraal is a curious formation of rocks that lie between the two mountains that bear those names. Close by is the village of the chief of all the Gallas."

"But how under the sun can this discovery benefit us?" repeated Guy half angrily. "Can you open our prison for us, Canaris?"

The Greek threw a cautious glance toward the door and then whispered in a voice that trembled with emotion, "Nothing is impossible; hope for the best. But stay," he added in sudden fear. "I must have money, or all is lost. Alas! You have none, I am sure."

For answer Guy hastily rose, and loosening his clothes, unhooked a small buckskin belt. He tore open the end and dropped a stream of golden sovereigns into his hand.

"Here is money," he cried. "The Arabs overlooked this when they searched me."

The Greek's eyes glittered.

"Give me twenty," he said; "that will be plenty."

He stowed the coins away in his clothes and picked up the lamp.

"I must leave you now," he said. "I will return in the morning."

He would have added more, but steps were heard in the corridor. The dungeon door clanged behind him, and Guy and Melton were left in darkness half stupefied by the strange story they had just heard and by the hope of escape which the Greek so confidently held out to them.

CHAPTER XII.—A DARING MOVE.

WHEN daylight came, the captives could scarcely believe that the events of the preceding night had not been all a dream. There was the document, however, to prove their reality, and Guy was deeply studying its faded characters when the Greek arrived.

His face was radiant with happiness, an expression which quickly gave way to deep sadness as a big Somali entered with a platter of food. The

latter had barely closed the door when Canaris held up a warning finger and motioned the Englishmen to draw near.

"It is well," he said softly. "I will tell you what I have done. Near the palace lives a Jewish merchant whom I know well. To him I went last night, and by the aid of your gold made a good bargain. On the western side of the city, close by the wall, is a deserted guard house that was once used before the watch towers were built. Here the Jew promised to take for me the goods I purchased, namely, a supply of dates, figs, and crackers, three revolvers, three rifles with boxes of shells, three sabers, two ancient bronze lamps with flasks of palm oil, a box of English candles, and four long ropes with iron hooks on the end."

"He will betray you to the Emir," said Guy in alarm.

"Oh, no," returned Canaris, "no danger of that. I know a little secret concerning my Jewish friend that would put his head above the town walls in an hour's time. The things are even now hidden in the deserted house, you may rely on that."

"But how are we going to get out of this infernal dungeon?" asked Guy. "And how can we pass through the streets to the edge of the town?"

For answer the Greek opened the leather case that he had brought with him, and took out three revolvers, three boxes of shells, a coil of rope, and a sharp knife.

"These are my surgical instruments," he said. "I will put them under the straw," and he suited the action to the word.

"Affairs outside have changed somewhat," he continued. "The people are sullen and restless. They mistrust the Emir, and fear they will be cheated of the pleasure they are looking forward to."

Guy turned pale. "Then we are lost," he cried.

"No, you are saved," said Canaris. "That very fact works for your salvation. The Emir is alarmed; he fears for himself, not for you. His troops are few since he despatched the caravan to Zaila, and at night for better security he takes the guards from the prison courtyard and stations them before the palace. This leaves three guards to contend with; one watches in the corridor, one stands before the prison door, and the third guards the gateway that opens from the prison yard on to a dark avenue of the town. If all goes well, you will be free men at midnight. I must hurry away now. Listen well to my instructions, and do just as I tell you.

"You," and he turned to Melton, "must pretend all day that your wound is bad. Refuse to eat, and lie on the straw all the time. It will be better if I do not return today. I fear that even now Rao Khan grows suspicious. The Arab doctor is angered because I have assumed his duties. At midnight, if you listen sharply, you will hear the guard relieved by a new man. Soon after that knock on the door, and when the guard looks in show him the wounded man, who will then feign to be very bad. I sleep in a rear apartment of the palace. The guard will send for me, and I will come. Otherwise my visiting you at that time of night would be looked upon with suspicion. The rest I will tell you then. Don't despair. All will be well; till midnight, farewell."

Canaris glided from the dungeon, and the prisoners were alone. They passed the long hours of that day in a strange mixture of hope and fear. The difficulties to be overcome seemed insurmountable. They must escape from the prison, pass through the very midst of their bloodthirsty enemies, scale the wall, and then—where were they? Hundreds of miles from the coast, surrounded by barbarous and savage people, and their only hope that mysterious underground river which in itself was a thing to be feared.

But on the other hand speedy death awaited them in the dungeon of Rao Khan. The chances were truly worth taking.

They followed instructions closely. When the guard brought them food at noon, and in the evening, Melton tossed on the floor as though in pain. The thrice welcome darkness came at last, and the light faded out of their dungeon. Once a horrible thought entered Guy's mind. What was to prevent the Greek from making his escape alone, and abandoning the Englishmen to their fate? It was but momentary, however, and then he dismissed the suspicion with a feeling of shame. He had already learned to trust the Greek implicitly.

Crouched by their dungeon door, they listened by the hour, and at last their patience was rewarded. Voices were heard, steps approached and died away, and then all was silent.

The time for action had come.

Melton threw himself on the straw and moaned. Guy rapped sharply on the door, and waited in suspense. Almost instantly it opened, and the guard, a tall Nubian, pushed his lamp into the doorway, and followed it up with his head and shoulders.

"Canaris, Canaris!" said Guy earnestly, pointing to Melton, who uttered at that moment a most unearthly groan.

The guard drew back and shut the door. His soft tread echoed down the corridor, and all was still.

The suspense of the next five minutes Guy will never forget as long as he lives. It seemed to his excited imagination as though an hour had passed by, when suddenly sounds were heard in the corridor, and in an instant more Canaris stood before them, his leather case at his side, a lamp in his hand. He closed the door, opened the case, and drew out two wide linen tunics and two long jackets such as the Emir's troops wore.

"Put these on," he whispered. "You can wear your helmets; there are many of them in Harar."

As he spoke, he drew an Arab burnous over his head, shading entirely his light hair and mustache. He next pulled the revolvers and shells from under the straw, distributed them around, and with the knife cut the rope in a dozen parts. By this time Guy and Melton had donned their disguises, and were ready for action.

Up to this point Guy had supposed that Canaris had bribed the guards and paved the way out of prison.

"You are sure the guards will let us pass?" he said.

Canaris looked at him in wonder, and then a smile rippled over his face.

"You thought I had bribed the guards," he said. "Ten thousand

pounds could not tempt them. They would only lose their heads in the morning. It matters little," he added. "They will lose them anyhow. But our time has come; be ready now to assist."

He motioned Guy and Melton behind the door, and then pulling it partly open, uttered a few words in a strange tongue.

Instantly the powerful frame of the big Nubian entered, and as he stood for one second on the dungeon floor, sudden mistrust in his ugly features, Canaris leaped at his throat and bore him heavily to the ground.

"Quick," he cried, and in an instant Guy and Melton had seized the struggling man's arms and feet.

Still pressing the fellow's windpipe with one muscular hand, Canaris thrust a gag into the gaping mouth, and in two minutes their captive was lying bound and helpless on the straw.

"What did you tell him?" asked Guy.

"I said our lamp was going out," Canaris replied. "And now for the man at the prison door. I must get him inside, for the post is in plain view of the guard at the gate."

A solution of this puzzling problem was closer at hand than any one imagined. The creaking of a door was heard, followed by approaching footsteps.

"Here he comes now," said Canaris in an excited whisper. "He has grown suspicious, and has determined to investigate. Quick!"

Canaris darted to the other side of the doorway, and then ensued another period of chilling suspense.

The tread came nearer, and at last another stalwart Nubian blocked the doorway with his massive bulk. His look of wonder was comical as he saw his comrade gagged and bound on the dungeon floor, but before the half articulated exclamation could escape his lips, Canaris had him by the throat, and down they came. The fellow uttered one cry, and then, as his head struck the edge of the door in falling, his struggles lessened, and with no trouble at all he was gagged and bound.

Canaris tore the ammunition from their belts, handed Guy and Melton their rifles, and then blowing out the lamp, he pushed them into the corridor and bolted the door.

"Two heads will be off in the morning," he remarked grimly. "One more victory and we are out of prison."

He blew out the light that stood in the corridor and led the way through the darkness till he reached the door. He pulled it open, a crack revealing the moonlit courtyard, and took a long, careful survey.

"There is the man we want," he whispered, pointing across the court, and putting his eyes to the crevice Guy saw against the massive prison wall a dark shadow, leaning grimly on a rifle.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE TOWN.

It was a critical situation for the three fugitives, crouching behind the heavy prison door. That grim sentry over yonder by the gate must be noiselessly and effectually overpowered, and that at once. Any moment

guards might come from the palace, and then—oh, it was horrible; the public square, the executioner's gleaming knife, the roar of the populace.

Guy's brain whirled at this appalling panorama, and he clutched the door for support.

"Can't we rush on him?" asked Melton.

Canaris laughed grimly.

"Before we could take three steps from the door," he said, "the fellow would see us and alarm the palace. If I go alone the chances are that before you can reach me he would succeed in making an outcry. Our only hope lies in getting away from the town before our escape is discovered."

"But what are you going to do, Canaris?" asked Guy excitedly. "We are losing precious time."

"Keep cool," replied the Greek. "I will fix him in five minutes. Stay where you are and don't make a sound. When I wave my hand, then come."

He removed his burnous and stuffed it under his tunic. Then he calmly opened the door and walked straight across the court toward the guard, who looked up carelessly at his approach. With their eyes glued against the cracks of the door Guy and Melton waited in terrible suspense.

A short conversation ensued. Canaris turned and pointed toward the prison. The guard replied with many gestures, and finally in his eagerness placed his rifle against the wall. What followed was so swift and dexterous that it passed like a dream.

The Greek's right hand shot from his bosom clasping some glittering object. It struck the astonished guard on the forehead with a sharp click that echoed across the court yard, and without a sound he dropped on his knees and then rolled over on the stone pavement.

Canaris waved his hand and then the two captives dashed breathlessly across the courtyard.

"Is he dead?" asked Guy in a horrified whisper.

"Only stunned," replied Canaris. "I struck him with the butt of my revolver. Quick now; bind and gag him while I find the key and open the gate."

Guy hastily fastened the fellow's feet and arms, and stuffed a roll of linen in his mouth.

Melton stood looking on. His wound was beginning to give him some pain again.

With a low exclamation of triumph Canaris pulled from the Nubian's waist a narrow belt on which hung a ponderous iron key. All rose to their feet. Guy dropped the unconscious guard under the shadow of the wall. The supreme moment had come. The great courtyard, white in the light of the moon, was empty. The heavy doors leading to the palace were shut. Behind the high prison walls all seemed quiet. The city was asleep.

The first stage of the journey was accomplished in safety. The terrible passage through the town was before them now. With a hand that trembled ever so slightly Canaris inserted the key in the lock. It turned with a harsh rattle, and at a touch of the hand the brazen gate swung outward.

The Greek made a hasty survey and then stepped noiselessly outside.

They were in a narrow side street which ran past the Emir's palace. The side toward the prison was in deep shadow. On the other side was a long stone building, with two or three narrow grated windows.

"That is an Arab storehouse opposite," said Canaris. "We are safe for the present. Now follow me closely. Walk boldly and fearlessly and keep a few feet apart."

He started off at a rapid gait, his white burnous tossing on his shoulders, and with fast beating hearts Guy and Melton came close behind. In five minutes they turned into another narrow passage running at right angles, and continuing along this for forty or fifty yards, made still another turn.

The two streets they had just traversed had been lined for the most part with big warehouses and slave markets. It was in fact the business part of the town, alive with people during the day, deserted at night. But now a crisis was at hand. Canaris halted his little party in the shadow of a building and pointed straight up the street.

"Yonder lies the main avenue," he said. "We must cross it to reach our destination. Keep yourselves well under control, don't show any fear, and if any people are about don't look at them. If they address you make no reply."

Guy marveled at the Greek's coolness under such terrible circumstances. Every moment was a torture to him as long as they remained in the midst of these bloodthirsty fiends.

In five minutes they reached the main street. From the slight ridge on which they stood they could see stretching afar on either hand the moonlit roadway, spectered with the dark shadows of the houses. They had been traveling on three sides of a square. Fifty yards down the street the tower of the Emir's palace was visible, outlined faintly against the pale gray sky.

As they stepped from the shadows upon the open roadway, an Arab stalked from a doorway opposite, and without troubling himself to come nearer addressed Canaris in a strange tongue.

Guy's heart seemed to leap into his throat as he nervously handled the revolver that stuck in his belt.

Canaris coolly replied in a low voice. The Arab evinced no intention of coming any nearer, and in an instant more the fugitives had plunged into the gloom of another cross street.

On all sides now were rude abodes, some of sandstone, others of clay, and at some places even tents were to be seen. Laughter and loud talking came from open windows. Two or three fierce looking Somali warriors stalked past in dignified silence, and an Arab sheik, wrapped closely in his garment, looked at them curiously as he hurried by.

Melton now walked with difficulty. His wound had broken out afresh and was bleeding. The weight of the rifle was too much for him, and he was compelled to abandon it in the road.

"A little farther now," said Canaris encouragingly, "and we shall be safe."

Melton tried to walk faster, leaning on Guy's arm, but at last, with a moan of pain, he sank to the ground.

"Go on, leave me; save yourselves," he whispered feebly as they bent over him and tried to lift him to his feet.

"One more effort, my dear Melton," implored Guy in an agony, "only one more effort and we shall be safe; we can carry you if you can't walk."

"No," he gasped. "Go, go at once. You can escape. I would only keep you back and cause your capture; better one than three."

Guy threw an appealing glance at Canaris. The Greek's features were immovable. He calmly waited the result of Guy's pleading.

"My brave fellow," said Chutney in a husky voice, kneeling down and clasping Melton's hand, "I refuse to accept your sacrifice. I shall remain here with you and we will meet our fate together. Canaris, save yourself while there is yet time. I will not desert my friend."

The Greek paused irresolutely. The convulsive workings of his face showed the struggle going on in his mind. Suddenly Melton rose on one elbow, and cried excitedly:

"Go, go, I tell you."

Guy shook his head. "No," he said decidedly, "I will remain."

"You are throwing your lives away," said Melton bitterly. "Here, help me up. I will make another effort."

In an instant Guy and Canaris had gladly pulled him to his feet, and off they went again as rapidly as possible. All was quiet around them. A deep silence, broken only by the occasional low of a cow, had enwrapped the town. So far their escape had remained undiscovered.

"Ah, here we are," said Canaris joyfully, turning down a dark, dirty passage, so narrow that the three could barely walk abreast. "In three minutes we shall reach the wall."

Three minutes is not a long time, but it is long enough for many things to happen. They had traversed half the length of the street when Guy, moved by one of those sudden, unexplainable impulses, turned his head.

Ten yards behind, crawling with soft and stealthy tread, was a grim, half naked Somali. How long he had been following in their track it was impossible to tell. But there he was, a stern Nemesis, the moonlight shining on spear and shield, and glowing on the dark, villainous features.

Guy and Canaris wheeled round and stood with drawn revolvers. The Somali clutched his spear and drew up his shield. The silence remained unbroken.

One single cry and a mad horde would rush forth like bees from a hive. The Somali made one step backward, then another, and then opening his mouth he gave a yell that was caught up in horrible echoes till the street fairly rang.

"Malediction!" cried Canaris in uncontrollable fury, "that's your last shout," and taking quick aim he pulled his revolver on the shouting Somali.

A stunning report, a hollow groan, and down came the savage all in a heap, while the heavy shield bounded with a clatter over the stones.

William Murray Graydon.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE BUNKEL MYSTERY.*

How the robbery of the rival banks became a matter of strange coincidences—Far reaching and totally unexpected results of an act of gallantry—The battles on Bunkel Island, and the frustrating of carefully laid plans.

MR. SINGERLAY and Mr. Barkpool are the two wealthiest citizens of Montoban. The former is proprietor of the Montoban Mill, and president of the Montoban Bank; the latter owns the Onongo Mill, and presides over the Onongo Bank. They have long been enemies, and their quarrel is shared by their sons, Dolph Singerlay and Phin Barkpool, but both the latter are beset by the same desire: to have a steamer of his own on the lake. Andy Lamb is the son of Mr. Barkpool's engineer, and he rescues Diana Singerlay from the persecutions of Tom Sawder, a young hoodlum. Phin quarrels with him in consequence, and the father is dismissed from the Barkpool employ, only to be hired by Mr. Singerlay. Meantime Dolph, despairing of obtaining his father's consent to the purchase of a steamer, takes his father's keys, and at midnight makes his way to the Montoban Bank. Just as he reaches the strong box in the vault, he is seized from behind and thrown to the floor. By the light of his lantern he discovers two persons standing over him, one of whom points a revolver at his head.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE ONONGO MAGNATE OVERWHELMED.

"WHAT is the matter with Dolph tonight, father?" asked Andy Lamb as soon as they reached the street.

"I'm sure I don't know; but it looks as though he had been cutting up some caper. I could see that he had been lying to his father, who caught him in the lies; but I have no idea what he was trying to cover up," replied Mr. Lamb. "He is a bad boy, and I wouldn't have a son like him if Mr. Singerlay would give me all his property."

"You noticed Dolph when we met him in the hall, didn't you? He had just come into the house, and his clothes were all covered with yellow mud."

"I saw him, and I thought then that he had been up to some mischief; but he explained how he happened to be in such a plight."

"Yes; but his story about the boat was all made up; and that was where he caught him in the lie," said Andy. "I have an idea that he knows who blew up the upper dam."

"What do you mean, Andy?" demanded the engineer, stopping short in his astonishment.

"If Dolph did not do it himself, he knows something about it," replied Andy.

"Don't mention such an idea, my son; you will get yourself into trouble if you open your mouth as freely as that," added the father cautiously.

"I say it only to you."

**This story began in the April issue of THE ARGOSY. The two back numbers will be mailed to any address on receipt of 20 cents.*

"But some one might have heard you," said the engineer, looking about him, for they were still in one of the streets of the town, and several persons were in sight.

"I won't say it again; but that is what came to my mind when I saw that Dolph was lying to his father."

"I cannot believe he did it, for to tell the truth I don't think he has brains enough to do such a job."

"Dolph has brains enough. He was smart enough in school, but he wouldn't apply himself; and that is the reason he made such a poor show."

"Where did he get the powder?"

"Some men have been blasting rocks for Mr. Barkpool just above the dam, and they had several kegs of powder, which they kept in an old spring house, built of brick, just beyond the mill."

"No one but myself and Mr. Barkpool knew about the opening under the dam, so far as I know."

"I don't *know* that Dolph did it, and I only mentioned what came into my head while I was in the house."

"Don't mention it again, Andy. If it is so, let his father find it out for himself," said the machinist.

"Dolph had a row with his father when I was in the lot, and I heard a part of it. He wanted the money to buy a steamer to put on the lake; and that was an idea of mine in connection with the coal question."

"Let them settle their own troubles," said the engineer, as they reached the house where Mrs. Lamb had called, and was waiting for them.

But they found that she had been tired of waiting, and had gone home with a neighbor who was going that way. It was hardly more than a quarter of a mile to the cottage, and the subject of Dolph's agency in blowing up the dam was not renewed, for Andy took occasion to inform his father in regard to his plan for the transportation of coal, freight, and passengers from the north end of the lake.

"I should say that the plan is a very good one, and I may mention it to Mr. Singerlay, if we get along well together. Coal is wanted now, for neither mill has taken its stock for the summer; but there is no steamer on the lake, so that nothing can be done about it at present," said Mr. Lamb, as they arrived at the cottage. "I am not in condition to do anything about it, and don't know how we could get a steamer into this lake if I were. Let the matter rest till the rich men take hold of it."

As soon as the machinist opened the back door of the cottage, his wife confronted him. She seemed to be excited about something, and shook her head as she raised her hand, as if to impose silence upon her husband and son.

"Mr. Barkpool is in the front room, and he has been waiting half an hour for you," said Mrs. Lamb, in a whisper, as though she feared some terrible consequences must attend the visit of the Onongo magnate.

"I am not afraid of him, Sarah," said the engineer. "You need not whisper; talk out loud, and say just what you think."

"Don't keep him waiting any longer, for he acts as though he was sitting

on a bunch of nettles, and I am sure he means some harm to you after what has happened. Do be careful what you say to him, Morgan."

"I will try to do so; but you had better go in and tell him to be careful what he says to me," added the engineer, with a smile. "I won't keep him waiting any longer."

"Do be careful!" exclaimed the wife earnestly.

"I will, Sarah. You may come with me, Andy, as you heard all that was said at his house."

Mr. Lamb entered the front room, followed by his son. He was prepared for a storm, though he could not imagine what his late employer wanted of him.

"Good evening, Mr. Barkpool," said he, as he went into the apartment.

"Good evening, Mr. Lamb," returned the magnate, with as much suavity as though they had not had high words a few hours before. "I have been waiting for you some time."

"Your call is very unexpected; if I had known you were coming, I should have been at home," added the machinist, as blandly as his visitor.

"We had a little fracas this evening; but I don't want to say a word about that, or bring up anything we talked about then," said Mr. Barkpool, rising from his chair, as though his seat burned him, and walking towards his late employee. "I have been paying you eighty dollars a month for the year round, which is very good wages for steady work."

"Very fair wages, and I found no fault with my pay," added the machinist.

"I discharged you; but I wish now to hire you again, and to pay you seventy five dollars a month, for the year round," continued the mill owner, in one of his insinuating tones.

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Barkpool; but when I go to work again, it will be at one hundred dollars a month, for the year round," added Mr. Lamb, with a cheerful smile, as he glanced at his son.

"One hundred dollars a month!" exclaimed the magnate. "That is too much."

"Then, if I had any influence with you, Mr. Barkpool, I should advise you not to pay it," answered the engineer.

"But I am in a tight place; I need an engineer at once—to tight, in fact, for Singerlay must know that my mill is at work at the usual time in the morning," replied the magnate. "I hope you will not take advantage of the circumstances."

"I assure you I will not take advantage at all of you, for I only said that when I went to work again, it would be at one hundred dollars a month."

"Very well; fix your own price; I will give you a hundred dollars a month," said Barkpool, with a sort of desperate energy.

"Unfortunately, I am not in condition to accept your offer at present," added the engineer.

"What do you mean, Lamb? Didn't you say you asked a hundred dollars a month?" demanded Mr. Barkpool, beginning to dance around the room in his excitement.

"No, sir; I only said I should go to work at that figure. I cannot accept your offer because I am engaged at the price named, with free house rent," said Mr. Lamb, in the gentlest terms possible.

"You are engaged? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that you won't work for me?" asked the magnate, beginning to boil over with wrath.

"I only mean that I am engaged for a year."

"Engaged to whom?"

"Mr. Singerlay."

"Singerlay! That is downright treason!" foamed the Onongo man.

"Treason? I think you discharged me, Mr. Barkpool."

"You might have waited till tomorrow before you engaged yourself."

"But Mr. Singerlay wanted me tonight."

The Onongo magnate was overwhelmed, and he rushed from the cottage as though a demon were pursuing him.

CHAPTER XV.—THE TREASON OF DOLPH SINGERLAY.

MR. BARKPOOL seemed to be completely upset when he went out of the cottage into the darkness of the evening. There were many people in the road who had walked as far as the upper dam to see the effects of the explosion, and the scene had been illuminated by fires on the shore. The magnate avoided them, for he was raging like a pent up volcano.

It was not a question of work to be done in the mills—of making goods to fill waiting orders—or anything of that kind, which rejoiced one magnate and enraged the other; it was only the success of one and the failure of the other in annoying his rival. Each desired to vex the other by having his mill in operation in spite of the disaster.

Mr. Barkpool realized that he had lost the battle, and lost it by his own folly. He had been willing to humiliate himself by "backing down" to the machinist; but even that had been a failure. The people who passed him in the road saw that he was in an unhappy frame of mind, dark as it was, for all his movements proclaimed the fact.

He walked so rapidly that he soon reached his mansion. Phin was in the office, and his father talked to him about his affairs; but they were on no better terms with each other than the father and son in the other great mansion. Like Dolph, Phin was a spoiled child; and it could hardly be otherwise after the weak indulgence of the foolish fathers.

If one of them had a boat, the other must have one.

From row boats they had gone to sail boats. Phin had been the first to be supplied with this luxury, and then came the Dragon, larger and better fitted up in many respects. Then Phin appeared in town riding on a pony. Three days later, Dolph was mounted on the finest steed that money would buy.

Then Diana was seen on the lake in a sail boat which outstripped all the others in elegance, for it had been brought from New York, and the builder had not been limited in the matter of expense. This last boat made Phin

uneasy. Then some one hinted that Dolph was to have a steamer, for though this enterprising young gentleman did not expose his plan to meet the coal question, he had declared that he meant to have a steamer on the lake.

People said he would have one if he wanted such a craft, for he always had his own way in such matters. Of course Phin wanted a steamer, and he wanted to have it before Dolph obtained one. But on one subject at least the two millionaires agreed. Mr. Barkpool refused to grant the request of his son, as Mr. Singerlay had done about the same time.

Phin rebelled, as Dolph had done. He had been impudent to his father. He thought his rich parent was very unreasonable, and declared that he would have a steamer. The battle with the son had followed that with the engineer. His father had stood by him in the quarrel with Andy, and Phin thought it was a favorable time to push his request.

Dolph Singerlay, as I have said, lay on the floor of the Montoban Bank, with a man holding him by the throat. Though he was far from comfortable in this position, it is necessary to leave him there a while longer in order to explain some of his earlier movements.

The hopeful son had found his father unwilling to listen to his scheme to run a steamer on the lake, and Dolph assured him that Mr. Barkpool would be more accommodating. This was touching the magnate in his most tender spot, but he regarded it as an idle threat; for surely his son could not seriously think of such abominable treason.

Very likely Dolph did use the idea as an idle threat. He hated the other mill owner as thoroughly as his father did, for he had been brought up to do so. He rushed out of the house, desperately angry because his father denied his request. He forgot all about the row boats, the sail boats, the ponies, and other gifts, and condemned his parent for this one failure to gratify his wishes.

The threat which he had used in the house came to his mind before he reached the street. As he thought of it he was confident that the rival house would be willing to hear him. Spurred on by this sudden impulse, without considering that he was plotting treason which his father could never forgive, he hastened to the Onongo mill.

Dolph happened to meet Mr. Barkpool going from the factory to his house. The magnate stopped and looked at him, for he had never seen one of the Singerlay family in that part of the town before. Dolph had covered his face with smiles, for he had a point to carry.

The magnate could not help feeling indignant at what he regarded as the impudence of the young man in putting on a smiling face in his presence.

"Good evening, Mr. Singerlay," he said, somewhat scornfully, intending to thorn the visitor a little for his presumption in coming upon his territory. "You do not often do us the honor of coming to this neighborhood."

"No, sir; but I have a little business with you," replied Dolph, who was not lacking in impudence.

"Business with me!" exclaimed the great man.

"But I have; I told my father that I should apply to you if he refused to grant my request," continued the scion of the house of Singerlay.

"And what was your request?" asked the head of the other house, opening his eyes very wide.

"Let me explain what led me to make it. It costs a great deal of money to bring coal here for the use of the mills in the dry time."

"That is as true as preaching; and it costs just as much to bring in our material, and carry out our goods. We should have had a railroad before this time if your father had been fair and reasonable," replied Mr. Barkpool, with a frown.

"My father says the same thing in regard to you. But I don't want to talk about that matter," replied Dolph, pleased to find that the rival had listened to him so far. "I want to show you how you can bring in coal and stock, and send out goods, as well as transport passengers both ways, at less cost than by rail."

"You want to show me!" exclaimed the magnate, laughing heartily at the assumption of the boy in proposing to show him anything. "But go on; I am willing to be shown."

"I knew you would be; and of course my father would kill me if he knew that I was giving you these points."

"Well, Mr. Singerlay, I am willing to believe that you are a bigger man than your father; but if you are in danger, I don't ask you to sacrifice your valuable life for me," chuckled the magnate.

"My father refused to hear me, and refused to grant my request; and now that I give you the points, it is on account of his folly, his blunder, his weakness," continued Dolph, not a little inflated by the consciousness of his own importance.

"That's quite true; your father will be the victim of his own weakness, as he has been many times before," replied the mill owner, greatly amused at the manner in which the young man rode his high horse. "But let me have the points you are talking about, if you please, for my supper must be about ready."

"All your coal and stock has to be carted five miles from the railroad; and father says it costs about as much to cart it as to convey it from the mines to the station," continued Dolph, very earnestly.

"Your father is about right for once."

"There is another railroad at the north end of the lake, which is not used at all by the people of Montoban. I propose to buy a steamer and several barges or canal boats," Dolph proceeded.

"Then you are after a steamer; and so is Phineas," interposed the magnate impatiently. "I refused to buy one for him, and I don't think I shall buy one for you."

"But this is business and not play."

"Well, now, I will think of it, and let you know what I decide," replied Mr. Barkpool.

"Let me give you the details of the plan I have in mind," suggested Dolph insinuatingly.

"I don't want to hear any more about it. I should have to load the coal from the boat, and cart it up here; and I might as well haul it from the sta-

tion," said the mill owner, disgusted with the plan, and leaving the advocate of the new method of transportation.

Dolph was as mad as he was when his father refused his request.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE VAULT OF THE ONONGO BANK.

DOLPH went home angry from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head—angry with both of the magnates, though one of them was his father. He had a brilliant business idea, and neither of them would listen to him. Of the two he was the more angry with Mr. Barkpool, for he had humiliated himself in going to his father's enemy.

He was inclined to punish both of the great men, and he decided to begin with the Onongo magnate. An old scheme which he had fostered into being in the fall came to his mind again. He went on board of the Dragon to think it over. He ate his supper on the remnants of a lunch he had carried with him the day before.

There was rather more water than usual coming down the river this summer, and there might be no drought, though the stream had failed the mills nearly every year before. There might be no dry time this season; and the Onongo could draw upon the reservoir. It was necessary to create a demand for coal; and neither of the mills had taken in its usual supply.

Dolph left the Dragon when he had finished his meal. He crossed the river on the bridge, and walked to the upper dam. As soon as it was dark, he recrossed the river on a foot bridge a short distance above, and crept cautiously to the brick spring house. He pried off the hasp by which the padlock secured the door.

With a great deal of hard work for a fellow who was not used to it, he conveyed several kegs of the blasting powder to the dam. He had studied up his plot before, and found the crevice in which the powder was to be placed, and he laid his mine with no little skill.

He had taken a supply of match paper, and when he had lighted it, he made a hasty retreat. Of course it was only by a miracle that he did not blow himself up. When he had completed his preparations, he started by the road for home taking care that no one should see him. Before he reached the bridge, the explosion took place.

He was startled when he heard the thunder of his own work, but he could not see what execution the powder had caused. In a moment more he heard the roar of the rushing waters, and then he knew that the mine had successfully accomplished the mischievous result. The river roared with a sound like thunder, and seemed to be tearing everything away before it.

He stopped on the bank of the stream a short distance above the bridge and concealed himself in the bushes, where he could see the uproar which he had caused. He had hardly taken this position before another crash saluted his ears.

The lower dam had been carried away. This was more than he had bargained for, or plotted to accomplish. He had punished both of the magnates at the same time for refusing to listen to his magnificent steamboat scheme.

Dolph was a philosopher in a wicked way, and he could only say that it had served them right.

Both mills would now be in want of coal; and he thought that one of them would soon see the advantage of his plan. But Dolph was unreasonably impatient, and he did not want to wait till the mill owners realized the need of his means of transportation.

He was impatient for another reason. The steamer he wished to purchase might be sold to some other person, and to make sure of it, he must buy it the very next day. The outlet of Lake Montoban was the Bondego River, into which flowed a stream from another pond named Modogo Lake. The steamer had plied on this lake; but she did not pay.

She was offered for sale at half her cost, or less. No purchaser appeared, and the owner had visited Montoban to effect a sale. People laughed at him, for it was not supposed that the craft could be brought over the Bondego rapids, though the owner insisted that it would be an easy matter.

Dolph had examined the rapids for himself, and was of the owner's opinion, though he talked just the other way, to prevent any other person from investing in the Lily, as the boat was called. There was no interest in boating in Montoban, and no one cared to see a steam craft on the lake.

As soon as the crowd had gathered on the bridge, Dolph mingled with it, and finally got home without being observed. He did not even notice that the Dragon and the Diana had been swept from their moorings by the sudden accession of water to the lake.

He was not pleased to meet Andy and his father in the hall; but he tried to cover up his tracks. In his room, when he had changed his clothes, he sat down to think over the situation. He was no nearer to getting the Lily than he had been before he blew up the dam. But in the evening, when his father handed him the bank keys, the means of raising the money for the purchase of the steamer was suggested to him, and he wondered he had not thought of "borrowing" the necessary amount from the bank before.

Unfortunately the owner of the Lily had talked to Phin Barkpool about the boat. He had applied to several persons, including Mr. Singerlay, without success; and he wanted to interest the sons of the two rich men. He had not only interested them, but he had infatuated them both.

Mr. Barkpool said no more to his son about the steamer, and he did not tell him of the visit of Dolph, for it would only make the boy more crazy to obtain the coveted craft. Phin did not say so, but he was not sorry the dam had been blown up; not that he expected to derive any advantage from the disaster, but he thought his father deserved to be chastened for refusing his reasonable request.

Among those who called to see the Onongo magnate after the catastrophe was Mr. Pullerton, the cashier of the Onongo bank. He was not required to bring the keys to the house of the president, but his presence suggested to Phin a way to get the large sum of money he wanted. He knew all about this bank, as Dolph knew about the other. It was easy enough to get into the building, and into the banking room. The trouble would be to get into the vault.

"By the way, Mr. Barkpool, this disaster reminds me that another might occur, and I have brought the set of duplicate keys of the vault with me," said Mr. Pullerton, when the explosion had been discussed.

"I don't understand you," replied the magnate. "What other disaster might occur?"

"If my house should be burned some night, and the ordinary keys should be rendered useless, it would be better to have the duplicates in some other place, for they might be lost. We should have to send a hundred miles to get any one to open the vault," replied the cashier.

"You are right, Mr. Pullerton, though I hope your house will not be burned down," added the magnate, as he took the keys.

Phin wondered if he had not, by some special inspiration, brought the keys to him for use that night. He had listened with intense eagerness to the conversation, and when he saw his father take the keys, he considered the question of the purchase of the steamer settled. He watched his father till he saw him put them in a drawer.

Mr. Barkpool was busy thinking of something else, and he gave very little attention to the keys, or to the call of the cashier. The dam was gone, and though he had an engine and coal enough to run it for a few days, he had no engineer; he had just discharged him.

He was sure that some enemy had blown up the dam in the interests of Singerlay, and though it was some consolation to know the other dam had also been destroyed, the only thing that would satisfy him was to have his mill running the next morning as usual. Such a triumph was worth some humiliation, and he started at once for the cottage of Morgan Lamb.

As soon as he was at home, after his failure to engage the engineer, he was in a state of great excitement, and he drank more whisky than was good for him in his efforts to quiet his nerves. The liquor made him sleepy, and he went to bed. He dropped into a deep slumber at once. Phin, who had retired, dressed himself, and obtained the keys, for his father had not thought of them again. He went to the bank, opened it, and lighted a lamp.

With the keys in his possession, he had no difficulty in opening the vault, and taking the lamp inside he closed the door. He had hardly begun his search for the bank bills before he was startled by a noise in the banking room. But he concluded that it had been made by a rat, or by the wind rattling the windows, and he resumed his search.

He found the drawer which contained the bills, and he had begun to take some of them out, when the door was thrown open, and a man sprang upon him. He tried to scream, but his assailant stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth. In another minute, he saw the barrels of a revolver confronting him, and then a man tied his hands behind him and fastened him to the bottom of a post in the room.

CHAPTER XVII.—DOLPH MAKES A LIBERAL PROPOSITION.

DOLPH SINGERLAY thought he was in a tight place when he found himself on the floor in the bank, with one man holding him by the throat, and an-

other pointing a pistol at his head. He could not even say that he would submit, or beg his assailants not to kill him. He did not feel much like buying a steamer just then, and the Lily was likely to remain for the present on the waters of Lake Modogo.

It was plain enough to Dolph, as soon as he was in condition to have anything plain to him, that the Montoban Bank was in the possession of a couple of bank robbers. They were not amateurs, like himself, for they did their business thoroughly as they went along.

It goes without saying that Dolph was sorry he had undertaken the job, for he had already made a failure of it; and he would have been content to do without any steamer if he could only get out of the scrape.

He could see now that he had shaken the bush while others were to gather the fruit. In other words, he had been kind enough to save the robbers the trouble of blowing up the lock of the vault, for he had brought the keys and opened it for them. Of course they were very much obliged to him, though they did not take the trouble to say so.

But they did not kill him, as he thought at first they intended to do. The sight of the revolver, within a foot of his head, had thoroughly subdued him, and he did not appear at all like the young fellow who had been so overbearing and saucy to his father. The two robbers, after they had tied his hands behind him, took no further notice of him, but returned to the vault, in the contents of which they had more interest than in him.

As soon as they were at a convenient distance from him Dolph began to feel better. One of the robbers had a dark lantern attached to his belt, which he closed as soon as the prisoner was secured, and the room was as black as a load of charcoal. The prisoner raised his head when he felt like himself, and looked around him.

He had been left on the floor, and there was nothing to prevent him from getting up, if he could do so with his arms tied behind him. He could see nothing but a faint light in the vault, for the operators had partly closed the doors. Dolph rolled his body a little way, and then thought he could get up; at any rate, he decided to make the attempt. It was not an easy thing to rise from the floor when bound as he was, as any one may know by trying it.

It required a struggle, and he made some noise by hitting the leg of a table. One of the robbers came out of the vault, with Dolph's lantern in his hand. When he saw that the prisoner had changed his position, and was trying to get up, he gave him a kick, which hurt.

"Don't you move agin! If you do I'll break every bone in your carcass!" said the robber.

"What are you about, Tom?" demanded the man remaining in the vault, in a loud and earnest whisper.

"He's tryin' to git away, Poddy," replied the one who had kicked Dolph.

"Douse that glim, and don't speak a word!" said the man. It now appeared that the other was only a boy of good growth.

Poddy, as the one in the room called his companion, gave no further at-

tention to the prisoner, or to his associate. He had found the drawer which contained the money, and he was very busy in transferring the bills to a leather bag he had brought with him. This task was completed in a few minutes, and then he searched the vault for anything he had overlooked.

He found nothing he wanted outside of the drawer; but the large packages of bills, labeled with big figures, which he found in the tills, seemed to satisfy him. There were plenty of papers, perhaps bonds, but he would not bother with them, for they were liable to lead to the detection of the robbers.

He closed the bag hastily, and then left the vault. He closed and locked the double doors of the strong room and put the keys in his pocket. Then he went to the rear room and closed the window by which he had entered, and put everything in the condition in which he had found it.

When Poddy spoke to his companion, and called him "Tom," Dolph had a glimmer of light; and the second time the latter spoke he had no difficulty in recognizing the voice of the chief of the hoodlums. The one who had kicked him was Tom Sawder, without a doubt.

Poddy was in a hurry, and taking Dolph by the collar of his coat, he assisted him to rise. Then he led him to the door, carefully closing the gate that was at the end of the counter. At the door he halted, and opened his dark lantern, so that the prisoner could see the revolver which he pointed at his head.

"I want you to understand that I will put a bullet through your head if you attempt to get away," said he in a loud whisper. "We won't hurt you if you keep still and do as you are told; and when we are done with you we will let you go. That is all; but we will make short work with you if you give us any trouble."

"I won't give you any trouble," replied Dolph.

"You had better not," added Poddy impressively.

"I should like to make a trade with you," continued Dolph, who had by this time recovered his self possession, and even his wickedness, if he had lost the latter for the moment.

"Say quick! What do you mean?" demanded Poddy, evidently interested, in spite of his hurry.

"I was going to borrow three thousand dollars of the bank for something. My father owns most of the stock, so that it was the same as borrowing it of him, only he would not lend me the money," Dolph proceeded to explain.

"Short stories!" exclaimed the robber.

"You have got all the money from the bank now. If you will lend me three thousand dollars of it, I will take the keys back to my father's room, and nobody will know that you have been here till the cashier misses the cash in the morning," added Dolph, who thought in himself that this would be a brilliant stroke of business if the principal burglar would agree to it.

"I won't trust you," replied Poddy, after a little hesitation, which showed that he was favorably impressed by the proposition.

"Then I will keep the keys in my room and my father will think I robbed the bank, and they will not look for you," argued Dolph.

Poddy was silent for a moment ; and possibly he would have consented to adopt the plan if he had not had other business on his hands.

"I won't trust you!" he exclaimed, at last. "In this business we don't trust any one."

The robber had made up his mind, and he did not allow Dolph to argue the point any further, for he took him by the collar and led him down the stairs, repeating his warning as he did so.

Dolph was disappointed, for when he had recovered his self possession, and with it his evil intentions, he began to hope he might yet become the owner of the Lily. Poddy meant business, and it was useless to attempt any resistance. The man held him by the collar, for he did not wish to fire the revolver in the deserted street, lest the report should people it with awakened citizens.

Tom Sawder held his tongue, and appeared to be nothing but a supernumerary in the operations of the night, for if he attempted to speak he was promptly silenced by his companion. Dolph noted the route taken by his conductor, but he was afraid to open his mouth even to utter a whisper. He divined the destination of the robbers, and was confirmed in his belief when they halted at the Onongo Bank.

Like the Montoban, the bank was in the second story, with the entrance at the side of a store. Poddy placed his prisoner at the side of this door, and took a lot of brass keys from his pocket. When he took hold of the knob, in order to insert the key, which he had probably fitted beforehand, he found that the door was not locked.

"Take hold of that cub, Tom; he may run away while we are busy," said Poddy. "This door is not locked; what does it mean?"

But the principal did not wait for the question to be answered. He opened the door, and Tom led Dolph into the lower entry. They tied him to the stair rail and went up. Poddy took off his shoes and led the way.

As he entered the room he was surprised to see a light.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A REMARKABLE DUPLICATE OPERATION.

DOLPH was glad to be left alone, though his arms were tied behind him and he was fastened to the stair rail. He had made a liberal proposition to the chief burglar; but his coming to the Onongo Bank explained why he had declined it. Poddy was no small operator, and he was not satisfied with the funds of one institution. He did business by wholesale.

Dolph was rather pleased than otherwise at the impartiality of the robbers in serving both banks alike. If they crippled one magnate, they extended the same treatment to the other. But he did not give much attention to this view of the situation, for he was moved by more personal and selfish considerations. He was a prisoner and he wanted to get out of the scrape.

If he could not get the three thousand dollars he wanted, he did not care to have his father deprived of the use of his large deposit just as he had to build a new dam. He wished to get away just then more than he wished anything else in this world.

He strained the cords that bound his arms to their utmost tension, but he could not break them. He pulled and twisted till the stair rail creaked and snapped, but nothing gave way. If he could only get loose he might save the money of the bank, and put a feather in his cap by the operation.

While he was jerking and squirming within his bonds, the two robbers went up stairs and discovered the light. If they had been astonished to see a glimmer in the vault of the other bank, they were doubly surprised to see the same thing again in the Onongo. Poddy seemed to be alarmed. Though it had been a robber like himself before, he could not believe in meeting with the same adventure a second time in the same night.

He could not have found such an event in any other place in the country—for two such magnates, diligently laboring to spoil their only sons, could be realized only in Montoban. A boy might cry for the moon, but there could not be two of them to rob a bank for a steamboat.

Poddy was so astonished that he halted at the door for some time before he could decide to advance. It could not be an amateur robber who was investigating the vault of the bank this time. He set it down as an impossibility. It must be the cashier or some other officer who was counting his cash or making up his accounts.

Whether Poddy's time was worth anything or not, he decided not to waste any of it. If it was the cashier who was in the vault, so much the worse for him, and he had better have gone to bed at his usual hour. The robber had not used days and weeks in preparing for this job to give it up without an effort, even if it cost the cashier a broken head, or even his life.

The chief operator looked into the vault, and then called Tom, who surveyed the interior of the strong box for a moment.

"It is Phin Barkpool!" said Tom Sawder, as soon as he had seen enough of the young man's face to satisfy him in regard to his identity.

Tom's fists were clinched, and his teeth were set together, for he connected Phin with his rebellious passenger in the Milly, as he did not hear what had passed between them before Andy Lamb went to the assistance of Di Singerlay.

Poddy did not wait to hear any more. He entered the vault, and laid violent hands on Phin, and secured him as he had the other magnate's son. Then he entered the vault again, and transferred all the money he could find to his bag. He looked with contempt upon bonds and other securities, so that his work was soon finished.

He closed the bag, which had probably never contained so much money before, for the Montoban had yielded a very rich harvest.

"You may take this cub, Tom, and I will attend to the other," said Poddy, as he joined his companion, after locking the vault, the keys of which he found at the inner door.

Tom removed the cord which bound Phin to the bottom of the post, and assisted him to his feet. He handled him very roughly, for the bitterness of the afternoon quarrel was still rankling in his breast. He jerked and kicked him when there was not the least need of doing so, for the prisoner was quite submissive, and was not thinking of buying a steamboat just then.

"None of that, Tom!" interposed his more gentlemanly associate, as he saw him kick his victim. "If you kick him again, I will give you some of the same sauce."

"I owe him a thrashing, and I'm go'n' to give it to him," muttered the hoodlum.

"What for?" asked Poddy, who did not seem to be in so much of a hurry as he had been, for doubtless he felt that the work of the night was substantially finished.

"He was with Andy Lamb, when——"

"Shut up, Tom! You are a mule; and you have no more sense than a one legged donkey!" interposed Poddy. "Phin was not willing to let Andy help the girl, for I heard all that passed between them. Andy jumped on board of the girl's boat in spite of him."

"That's so," added Phin, deeming it wise to keep on good terms with his persecutors. "Andy's father was discharged from his place because he took his son's part against me."

"I didn't know that," replied Tom, appeased by what he had heard. "But when I ketch Andy Lamb, I'll bet there will be music."

"Drop that now, Tom!" said Poddy. "Lead him down the stairs, and see that the other cub is all right."

Tom obeyed the order, while his superior locked the door of the room. Dolph had labored in vain to break his bonds. He had removed not a little of the cuticle from his arms, and wrenched his back in his struggles; but he had accomplished nothing. When he saw Tom Sawder coming down the stairs with Phin Barkpool, he did not know what to make of it.

Disappointment gave way to wonder and overwhelming astonishment in the mind of the first prisoner when he saw the second. The situation was beyond his comprehension. Phin was coming down the stairs from the bawking room, and he must have been captured there. How came he in the bank at this hour of the night?

Poddy gave him no time to consider the matter, for he untied him at once, putting all the cords back into his side pocket. The entry was lighted by his dark lantern, which he had opened when he came out of the apartment above. Then he stopped and began to feel about his clothes, and look on the floor, as he had done when he left the upper story.

"What you lost, Poddy?" asked Tom, and he waited for the other to leave the building.

"I am only looking to see that I have not lost anything," replied Poddy as he continued his examination. "In this business I am careful not to leave anything behind for detectives and constables to work upon; and I want you to do the same."

Tom looked at his ragged habiliments, but he could hardly have told whether or not he had lost a rag or a button. Poddy took Dolph by the collar after he had warned him of the peril of attempting to escape, and marched him into the street while Tom followed with Phin. In a couple of minutes they came to the mouth of Rockrib Creek, for the Ouongo Bank was on this side of the town.

Near the place where the Milly was moored, they came to a row boat, which neither Dolph nor Phin had ever seen before. The prisoners were seated in it, and Tom took his place at the oars ; but as soon as the boat was a couple of rods from the shore, Poddy told him to cease rowing. Then he untied the cords which confined Dolph, and directed Tom to do the same with Phin.

"I don't mean to hurt you, youngsters, and I want you to be as comfortable as possible now that we are out of danger," said Poddy.

"I am much obliged to you ; but I thought you were going to let me go home as soon as you had finished the job," replied Dolph, who was willing to admit that the chief robber was a very gentlemanly rascal.

"Not yet, my lad ; it would not be prudent for us to let you go now. We might get bagged, and it would break your heart to see us sent up for twenty years."

Tom took the oars again at Poddy's order.

CHAPTER XIX.—ON THE WAY TO BUNKEL ISLAND.

TOM SAWDER took the oars, but he was not inclined to use them. It was about one o'clock in the morning when they left the last bank, and the hoodlum gaped fearfully when the excitement of the capture and robbery had subsided. He had been on his feet all the day before, working hard most of the time, and he was tired.

"I don't want to row all the way back to Bunkel," said he, in a whining tone. "I ain't used to bein' up all night, and I'm jest about tuckered out."

"I will row a part of the way, as soon as we get a little farther from the town," replied Poddy.

"Why don't you take my sail boat ? There is a good wind," suggested Phin Barkpool.

"That would be an easy way to do it ; but the boat at the island might serve us a bad turn if any one found it there," said Poddy.

"You will not want me after we get to the island, and I will sail her back," Phin proposed.

"Pull away, Tom," added the chief. "We don't want to stop here all night."

"Can't we take the sail boat ?" asked the hoodlum.

"No, we can't ! And if you don't use those oars, I will throw you overboard !"

"I will take the boat back so that it won't do you any harm," persisted Phin.

"I will help him," added Dolph.

"You are very kind, and willing to make yourselves useful ; but if I accepted your offer, I should expect a visit from the policemen of Montoban before daylight in the morning," replied Poddy. The big haul he had made at the two banks evidently made him more good natured than his associate.

"But I will agree not to say a word," protested Phin.

"So will I," added Dolph.

"I will not trust you," answered Poddy decidedly.

"I shall go directly home and go to bed. I will put the keys back in the drawer where I found them, and I will promise on my word and honor not to open my mouth," pleaded Phin.

"I will put the keys of our bank on the table at the head of my father's bed, where he keeps them nights, and swear not to lisp a syllable," added Dolph.

"I won't do it," repeated Poddy.

"But we shall be missed in the morning, and my father will turn the world upside down before breakfast time, and he will find you if you are anywhere on the habitable globe," argued Dolph, as earnestly as a lawyer making a special plea.

"That's just what my father will do," added Phin. "He will have a dozen detectives here from New York City; and they will be sure to find you."

"I see that you are trying to scare me, my dear young friends," replied Poddy jocosely. "But I don't feel faint yet. You don't stipulate for the three thousand dollars you wanted when you made the offer to the bank, Mr. Singerlay."

"But I should like it all the same," said Dolph. "You have done a big job tonight, and I think you might lend me the money without missing it."

"Mr. Barkpool would want another three thousand," chuckled the robber. "Six thousand dollars would make a big hole in my hard earnings, and I don't think I could afford to make such a sacrifice."

"It would postpone the search for you till nine o'clock, or later; and that would enable you to get out of the way of the policemen," reasoned Dolph.

"But we don't want to get away, my little joker."

"You don't want to get away!"

"Not at present."

"What are you going to do, then?" asked the puzzled prisoner.

"I should certainly be caught if I showed myself at any time within the next three days," said Poddy, with a laugh.

"You have got to get rid of me some time; and it will be just as dangerous three days from now as it will at the present time," continued Dolph, who was not willing to give up his point.

"I see that you are a lawyer, Mr. Singerlay; but if it is all the same to you, I will manage this case myself. I don't want to damage your self esteem, but I am forced to say that I have no confidence in your good intentions."

"I can't row any more, Poddy; I'm used up, an' I ain't no better'n a bullfrog in a kittle of b'ilin' water," said Tom Sawder, breaking in upon the argument. "These fellers ain't doin' nothin'; what's the reason they can't do some of the hard work?"

"Well, they don't come in for a share of the swag, and I suppose they won't feel much like assisting us in the work," suggested Poddy, in his jocos

way. "I have to give you a thousand dollars of the money, Tom; and you must earn your share."

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed Tom, dropping the oars and springing to his feet at the risk of upsetting the light boat in which they were making the trip to the island. "Don't you mean to give me more'n a thousand dollars, Ben Podgate?"

"Shut up, Tom!" replied the chief, in a tone that was almost savage. It was clear that there were claws beneath the velvety paws he had been using.

The hoodlum had used a name which had not been heard before by the prisoners; and this appeared to have roused the anger of the professional robber who was managing the affair, for Tom stammered out that he forgot. The assistant was sorry that he had used the name; but his regret did not appease his wrath at the mention of the share he was to receive of the plunder.

"Don't you mean to give me more'n a thousand?" repeated Tom, but this time without using any name.

"That's more than you have earned," answered Poddy, in a surly tone.

"I won't stand it!" protested Tom. "If that's all I'm to have, I don't do nothin' more."

"If you don't pick up the oars, you will not get anything," added Poddy sternly.

"I won't do nothin' more till I know how much I'm go'n' to have of the swag. I've been workin' like a dog for a week gettin' things ready; and now you are go'n' to put me off with a thousand dollars. I won't stand it!"

"If you don't take the oars, you will sleep the rest of the night on the bottom of the lake; and you will have time enough then to rest yourself," added Poddy, as he took a revolver from his pocket and pointed it at his rebel associate.

"Do you mean to shoot me?" demanded Tom, as he picked up the oars.

"I would shoot you as quick as I would a mad dog if you don't mind. Now, pull away, and don't open your ugly mouth again."

Tom Sawder could not stand up against this kind of discipline, and he renewed his labors at the oars. The chief was not in a pleasant frame of mind, though he had easily carried his point. The prisoners were not inclined to say anything under these circumstances; Poddy was apparently as ready to shoot a man as he was to rob a bank. Silence prevailed for a short time, and then the leader appeared to have recovered his good natured mood.

"I suppose you are tired, Tom; and perhaps these young gentlemen would like a little exercise, as I am sure they are skilful oarsmen," said he, when the hoodlum's powers seemed to be failing him.

"I am willing to row for one; but I should like a share of the swag, as you call it," added Dolph.

"So am I, on the same terms," said Pl

Both of them still had a vision of a steamboat floating in their imaginations.

"Without terms or conditions, I should be glad to have you take the oars; otherwise I will do the rowing myself," answered Poddy, as pleasantly as ever.

"Very well, I will take the stroke oar, and leave the terms to your good will," replied Dolph, as he took his place.

Phin followed his example with the same remark. It was the first time the sons of the magnates had ever been in the same boat; but they pulled well together.

"I have another offer to make," continued Dolph, without suspending his work. "I am sure you will accept this one, Mr. Poddy."

Poddy was willing to hear it.

Oliver Optic.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A WEIRD INTERVAL.

The strange derangement of identity that caused Dr. Cadwalader deep anxiety—Only a boyish memory in a man's mind—The chance incident that applied the needed remedy.

DR. CADWALADER had been an exile from his native land for eight years. One might imagine, from the joy which possessed him now that the Lucania was bearing him home again with almost the speed of an express train, that this exile had been spent in that dismal spot with which the word invariably associates itself—Siberia. But far from this being the case, his term of banishment had been passed in no more dreary a retreat than Paris, where he had built up for himself a splendid practice in the American colony. Now, he had snatched a two months' vacation during the early spring to come back to the United States to be married.

Oh, no, he would not have to hunt up a wife after his arrival. Edna Deering had promised to be his bride eight years before, when he, an impatient youth of twenty, had asked the blushing girl of sixteen if she would be content to wait for him.

"Dear Will," she had whispered back, "I will be content to wait all my life for you."

And Cadwalader loved to think of her as she looked then. He carried her photograph away with him, and during all these years of separation had asked for no other.

"Let us think of each other," he wrote, "as we were when we parted, not as time may have changed us and made us seem strange each to the other."

And so Edna in her turn gazed each night the last thing before retiring on the portrait of the handsome, beardless youth from whom she was separated by three thousand miles of sea.

And now Will was coming home to surprise her. He had written that he would come by the Paris in April, the month that had been set for the wedding. Thinking that it might be possible for him to get away in March, he had said nothing of it, fearing to disappoint her after all; but when mat-

ters finally turned out so that he could leave, he packed up in one night, took the fastest steamer afloat, and was now nearly at his journey's end.

"What delicious fun," he kept telling himself, "to walk in on them—send up some other name, and then see if she knows me!"

He mingled little with the few passengers on board. His happy anticipations were the best of company, he decided. He sometimes chatted on deck with Miss Orton, from Buffalo, who sat next him at table. One morning he was explaining to her how to mark her chart of the ship's speed, and he caught her looking at him with a curious expression as he announced, with a little triumphant ring in his tones, that there remained less than five hundred miles for them to cover.

"You are very anxious to get across, Mr. Cadwalader," she said, lifting her eyes suddenly to look at him.

He blushed in spite of himself, and Miss Orton laughed.

Cadwalader wondered if she had guessed his secret.

But it didn't matter, he told himself. He should probably never see her again.

Long afterward he wondered if things would have turned out differently if he had not seen her again.

There was, of course, nobody to meet him at the pier. He had been an orphan for many years, and the uncle with whom he lived up to the time of his departure for Europe had since died. So when he reached New York there was nothing to detain him there, for the Deerings had long since moved to Peekskill. And leaving his trunks in temporary storage, Cadwalader started for Peekskill within three hours after the *Lucania* had landed him at her pier.

The train was due at Peekskill at eight fifteen. He had snatched a little supper before leaving. He would arrive at the house just about the time one might be expected to make an ordinary evening call. What name should he send in, he asked himself? Anderson, he decided, would do. That was his middle name, the same as his cousin, now in Chicago, who had called on Edna sometimes in the old days.

And Edna would be twenty four now! He could not realize it. He found it impossible to make himself think of her in any other light than the fairy-like creature in the earliest spring time of beautiful womanhood. But that he would love her more fondly, if that were possible, in the new environment than in the old, he had no manner of doubt. He was hungering now for a sight of her face, more fiercely, it seemed to him, than at any time since he had gone away, eight years before. The train appeared to go very slowly for an express. Ah, now it had come to a stop!

Cadwalader rose from his comfortable position in the revolving chair and strolled to the rear door. The brakeman was just leaving the platform with his red lantern to signal that the train was blocked.

"What's the matter?" Cadwalader asked him.

But the man hurried off, pretending not to hear. He was well drilled in his duty toward the company. Cadwalader noticed that there was a curve just behind them. He stood watching the swaying light as the flagman carried

it away from him, until it had disappeared around the bend. Then a half sigh of relief escaped him.

"It would be too hard to go down in sight of port," he told himself, with a sort of smile at the idea of such somber thoughts suggesting themselves. Then he turned and walked toward the other end of the car. Two or three gentlemen were standing by the further door.

"The Tarrytown Accommodation has broken down ahead of us," one of them explained.

Cadwalader chafed at the delay. If it made them over half an hour late, he was afraid he would not be able to get to the Deerings' that night. It would scarcely do, he reflected, to present himself after nine o'clock.

He went out on the platform and thence to the ground. He crossed over the down track, and stood for a moment by the edge of the Hudson.

The waves, raised by the gusty west wind, beat noisily against the stone embankment, and now and then the spray dashed up into his face. He had not yet quite got his "sea legs" off, and decided that it would be safer as well as more comfortable in the car. He had brought a novel with him; now that there was no motion he could read without discomfort to his eyes.

He returned to his seat, and as he settled himself back, with his head resting on the plush, he thought with a sense of security that he was glad he had seen that brakeman go back with his lantern.

He opened his book and began to read. The story, which he had picked up hap hazard on the news stand in the waiting room at the Grand Central, seemed singularly appropriate. It opened with the return of the lover after a year's absence. He rings the bell at the home of the betrothed, inquires for her, and the servant looks blank.

"She has——"

Cadwalader never read any further than that. A crash sounded in his ears, and then he was conscious of no other sensation until he heard a canary bird singing.

He held his eyes closed for an instant longer to take in to the fullest extent the exquisite melody. Then the song suddenly ceased, and the young man looked about him.

All was strange. He was in bed, but where he knew not. And what was stranger still, this ignorance seemed to cause him no concern. He lay there blissfully enjoying the comfort of the couch, and watching, with the interest of a child, the flickering sunshine as it came through the bowed shutters and disported itself in fantastic shapes on the wall paper.

He heard the murmur of voices in another room. They were very soft, sweet voices. He wondered if it could be his mother and Cousin Kate talking. He remembered now what had happened to him to give him this sort of stunned sensation in the back of his head. The great bob sled he and his chum Harry Clark had built had run into Alonzo Peterman's farm wagon, and he, Will, must have been pretty badly hurt. But this house didn't seem like home. Perhaps, though, the doctors had thought it dangerous to have him moved far, and he had been carried into a neighbor's.

He had just arrived at this conclusion when the murmur of voices in the

other room ceased, and some one came into the apartment where he lay. He kept his eyes fastened on her as she approached the bed. He thought she was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. And yet she was a stranger to him. He wrinkled his brow in a frown, trying to place her.

She noticed the movement and hurried forward with the question, "Are you in pain?"

He shook his head and looked up into her face with a smile on his own.

"You are looking much better today," she said. "Won't you let me feel your pulse?"

He drew his left hand out from under the bed clothes. A thrill went through him when she took his wrist between her dainty fingers.

"Yes, very encouraging," she responded.

She relaxed the clasp, and in his weak state his hand dropped, chancing to brush close by his face. In doing so he felt something strange. He lifted his hand again and passed it across his upper lip, covered by his blond mustache.

A look of perplexity, of horror almost, came into his eyes. He gave a sort of groan, dropped his hand, and great beads of perspiration came out on his forehead. His poor brain, twisted all askew by the blow on the head he had received in the collision, was at sea again. He thought he had placed himself right in putting himself back in boyhood. He could remember nothing beyond that point. Had he lost his own identity entirely, and was he not Will Cadwalader at all?

He made a mighty effort of mind to comprehend the mystery, but it was too deep for him. He raised himself in the bed for an instant, gave a look around the room, then an agonized, pleading one into the face of her who stood by his side, and fell back on the pillow again in a swoon.

He was conscious that tender hands administered to him, that the soft, sweet voice he had already heard spoke of him as "poor fellow! I wish that we might help him," and then he slept, to wake again with a light burning in the room and a young man sitting by the bedside and looking fixedly at him.

"Good," exclaimed the latter, as Cadwalader opened his eyes. "You look bright and cheerful. How do you feel?"

"Where am I?" was the other's only response to this. He knitted his brow thoughtfully and gazed fixedly at his questioner.

"In my house, Dr. Raymond's, in Tarrytown."

"Tarrytown?" repeated Cadwalader, the look of perplexity deepening on his face.

"Yes, don't you remember the railroad accident? You were hurt; very badly. For days you were quite unconscious. I had you brought straight here; the hospital was full, and—besides, I was much interested in your case. I am a physician, you know. You remember now, do you not?"

"A railroad accident?" repeated the other. "Ah, perhaps you thought it was the cars that did it. We ran into Alonzo's wagon near the track. And Harry? Tell me, was he hurt as badly as I was?"

Then, before the other could answer, he went on, the wild look coming

into his eyes: "But you said that this was Tarrytown. And—and there is this"—he drew his finger swiftly across his mustache, then put up his other hand to feel the week's growth of beard upon his chin—"I can't understand it. Merciful heaven, I know not who I am!"

"There, be calm, my dear boy. It will all come back to you in time. I will turn down the light now and go out that you may get some sleep."

But Cadwalader did not sleep for hours after that. He seemed like one who, while yet having a body endowed with breath and all the functions for living, was yet without a soul—that inner consciousness that tells a man who he is, and gives him a place in the community. For now even the memory of his own name had gone from him.

Again and again he tried to recall the railroad accident of which he had been told; but the only recollection he had of the cars was when he and Harry Clark had gone to the Adirondacks one summer and camped out. If he could only see Harry, perhaps all would come straight again. But Tarrytown!

That place was miles from home, down by New York, a city in which he had never been. Oh, it was all a horrible mystery, a nightmare! Perhaps if he waited, as the other had said, the mist would clear away.

It was towards morning when he finally fell asleep; and when he woke again, it was to hear once more that bird singing and see the golden shafts of the sun stealing into the room.

"You will have some breakfast now, I am sure."

Cadwalader turned his head at the sound of the voice whose sweetness he had already remarked. She was arranging a tempting repast on a little table by the bedside.

"Arthur says you may eat civilized food now," she went on with a little laugh, "and give up gruels and all that."

"Who is Arthur?" asked Cadwalader as he took the napkin she handed him.

"Why, my cousin, the doctor," was the answer. "You feel a great deal better today, don't you?"

"Yes, I think I do, now that I've decided to wait patiently as your cousin advised till memory comes back to me. You can't tell me anything about Harry Clark, can you?"

The pretty head was shaken, while a brief look of anxiety came into the hazel eyes.

"Here is some honey, made by Arthur's own bees. I am sure you will like it."

"I believe you are afraid of me," Cadwalader began a moment or two later. "But really, I can't blame you," he added. "If a man doesn't know his own name, other people have a right to be a little shy of him. By the way, is there a hand mirror about here? Perhaps if I took a look at it myself, it might help me. You won't think me conceited, will you?"

"Oh, very," she laughed, and went off to get the glass.

Cadwalader looked long and earnestly at his own reflection. The sensation was the strangest he had ever experienced—that of looking at his own

countenance and finding it as the face of one whom he had never seen before.

"Tell me something about myself," he said as he handed the mirror back. "Don't you know who I am?"

"Not yet," replied the girl, with her ready smile. "Somebody had robbed you while you lay helpless there in the wreck. Arthur does not even know what station your ticket called for. The conductor was killed, you know."

"No, I don't know," Cadwalader rejoined softly. "Tell me about it, won't you please? Were any of the passengers killed, too?"

"Yes, eight or nine of them. The brakeman got talking and let the train he was to signal go by. Oh, it was a dreadful thing!"

"But it was very good in—in your cousin to bring me here—to his home. What made him do it? Just think what obligations he puts me under to him, and how am I ever to pay him back? I seem as helpless as an infant."

"Oh, you mustn't worry about that," broke in the other, noting that the patient's forehead was beginning to wrinkle. "The accident happened right at the foot of our garden here; it was thought unsafe to carry you far, and Arthur already has his reward in your speedy recovery. No, no, you mustn't try to think so hard who you are. It will all come back to you very soon now."

"Hasn't anybody inquired after me," asked Cadwalader. "I ought to send a telegram to my mother. Will you write one for me?"

"Yes, indeed," responded the fair nurse, and she seated herself at the escritoire in the corner. "What shall I say? Mrs.——"

She held the pencil poised and looked over toward the bed questioningly.

"I can't remember her name, nor the town. I only recall Harry Clark and Alonzo Petermau." Cadwalader spoke very soberly. Then, noting his seriousness reflected in the face of his companion, he added more cheerfully, "But I will pin my faith to your cousin's opinion and wait."

And in spite of all, these days of waiting were very pleasant ones. Dr. Raymond was a charming fellow. He would not permit his patient to worry for one instant about his strange position in the household.

"You have already repaid me to the full," he would say. "Why, there are hundreds of physicians in the country who would give thousands of dollars to have the opportunity I enjoy of studying at first hand a case as peculiar as yours."

With this assurance to make his mind easy, Cadwalader gave himself up entirely to the task of getting well as speedily as possible. Dr. Raymond provided him with clothing as soon as he was able to get up, and though he was still very weak—for his entire body had been subjected to a severe strain—he could walk about the house from room to room, and after a day or two came down stairs to his meals.

The doctor's wife, he learned now, had been called away by the serious illness of her mother, who lived at Syracuse. Her cousin was keeping house for him—"Cousin," the doctor called her, and Cadwalader found himself more and more dependent upon her. When she was out in the morning to

market he was restless until she came back, and when one morning he entered the breakfast room and found her place vacant he inquired of the doctor with great concern if his cousin was ill.

"No, she has gone home up the river," was the reply.

"And isn't she coming back?" went on Cadwalader anxiously.

"Yes, but not just now. My wife returns tonight," and the doctor's face beamed.

Cadwalader said but little during the remainder of the meal. He was thinking of how much he would miss "Cousin."

It was a charming day—the first really warm one of the opening spring. When Dr. Raymond started off to make his morning calls, Cadwalader went out into the garden and strolled reflectively up and down the garden paths. His eyes had a serious look in them, and the lines across his forehead showed dissatisfaction with something or somebody.

"What a life this is to lead!" he was saying to himself. "Who am I, and where do I belong? Perhaps I have a wife and children somewhere——"

As this thought occurred to him he was conscious of a sharp twinge. He recollected her who had ministered to him so sweetly during the past week. Could he feel drawn so closely to another as he was now to her? But he might not be married. The chances were all against it, it seemed to him. He was now more eager than ever to regain full control of his mind. The very fact that he was beginning to feel the strangeness, the ignominy of his position so keenly gave him hope.

A robin, alighting on a branch just over his head, began to sing rapturously. Cadwalader halted and attempted to recall where he had heard just such bird song before. But his memory would carry him no further back than the canary at the Raymonds', whose notes were the first sounds that seemed ever to have fallen on his ear.

"It's no use," he muttered wearily, as he moved on again, and his limbs, which had appeared to be stronger when he first came out, now gave signs of weakness.

There was a bench at the lower end of the garden. He tottered to this and flung himself upon it. Just then a whistle sounded close at hand. The railroad, as has been said, ran past the foot of the Raymond garden. A train from New York had just come in. There was some delay on the track ahead. It slowed up and came to a standstill with one of the parlor cars just the other side of the hedge.

Cadwalader raised his head and looked, languidly at first, at the passengers gazing from the windows. All at once the languor left him; a strange, inexplicable expression flashed into his face. He rose to his feet and began to move toward the hedge, his eyes fixed on a face at one of the car windows.

Now she saw and recognized him. It was Miss Orton. She was bowing and smiling, trying to raise the heavy sash.

With a rush everything came back to Cadwalader. As if growing out of her face, the heavy, saltish air of the sea seemed to be in his nostrils, the trembling of the mighty ship under his feet. He remembered all now. He had come back to America from Paris, his name was——

"Oh, Dr. Cadwalader!" A gentleman had raised the window for Miss Orton, and she had called out the young doctor's name just as he thought it was possible he would recollect it himself.

He raised his hat and was about to speak when the train moved on, and the next second was out of sight. Cadwalader stood there in the same position, looking after it. It seemed to him as if he had just been born again after death. Every fact connected with his last conscious moment as Will Cadwalader came up distinctly in his mind.

And Edna!

But with the thought of her the look of happiness left his face. The image that kept coming up in his brain when he pictured his betrothed was always that of her whom he had first looked upon when returning consciousness came to him. He wished that he might see her now, so that he could tell her who he was, and that—

But no, no. He must never see her again; he was afraid he could not even bring himself to talk about her with Edna.

He went back into the house and waited impatiently for Dr. Raymond's return, but at noon a message came from him stating that he had been called out into the country and would not be home for dinner.

Cadwalader determined not to wait for him. He felt now that every hour he remained in this house estranged him further from Edna. He wrote a note to the doctor, explaining how memory had returned to him and announcing that he had gone to Peekskill, but would be back in a day or two to return the clothes, and so forth. Then he went off to the station and telegraphed to New York for his trunks. He thought of sending a message to Edna, but recollecting that she could not have expected him yet, decided that he would surprise her. But when he tried to imagine what form of expression this surprise would take on her face, it was always the face of Mrs. Raymond's cousin he saw.

And during the entire ride to Peekskill this same face kept itself steadily before his mental vision. In vain he argued with himself on the absurdity of being in love with a woman whose name he did not know. By the time he reached his destination he was utterly miserable—desperate almost.

Mechanically he inquired of the station master how to reach the Deering residence; then he went out and made his way into the town.

He had not far to go. He saw Mrs. Deering looking at him from an upper window as he lifted the latch and entered the gateway. He thought it was strange that she did not throw up her hands with an exclamation of surprise, and hurry down to meet him. Then it came over him that of course she did not recognize him with his mustache.

"And Edna?" he thought then. "Will her love inform her who it is?"

Again came the vision of that other face between. Must he always be tortured like this?

But now the servant had opened the door, and he asked if Miss Deering was in. No, she was not.

"Mrs. Deering, then?" Cadwalader went on.

He was ushered into the parlor, and sent up his name. As he took his

seat by the window, he looked out and saw Dr. Raymond's cousin coming in at the gate. She saw him, too, and a strange look came into her face as she hurried forward. She opened the door, and came into the parlor.

"You are a friend of Miss Deering's, then?" he said.

She had put out her hand, and he had taken it with an eagerness he hoped she did not notice.

At that instant Mrs. Deering entered the room.

"Will, my dear boy!" she cried, placing her arms about his neck.

There was a stifled cry, and "Dr. Raymond's cousin" clutched Cadwalader's coat just in time to save herself from falling.

"Edna!" he gasped, as he caught her in his arms.

* * * * *

"Can you ever forgive me, dear, for falling in love with you, believing you to be somebody else?"

Cadwalader put the question an hour later, after the major part of the explanations had been gone over with.

"Can you do the same with me, Will?" was the softly whispered reply.

"Have you not guessed yet the reason I left Arthur's so suddenly?"

And in the ecstasy of that moment Cadwalader felt that he was the happiest man on earth.

Matthew White, Jr.

BACHELORDOM.

A PIPE, a book,
 A cosy nook,
 A fire—at least its embers —
 A dog, a glass—
 'Tis thus we pass
 Such hours as one remembers.
 Who'd wish to wed?
 Poor Cupid's dead
 These thousand years, I wager.
 The modern maid
 Is but a jade
 Not worth the time to cage her.
 In silken gown
 To "take" the town
 Her first and last ambition,
 What good is she
 To you or me
 Who have but a "position"?
 So let us drink
 To her—but think
 Of him who has to keep her,
 And sans a wife
 Let's spend our life
 In bachelordom—it's cheaper.

A MONTH IN THE MOON.*

The marvelous experiences that grew out of the Lunar Company, Limited—How the catch-penny scheme of three adventurers was transformed into an extraordinary contribution to the world of science—Scenes and incidents of a sojourn on the earth's satellite.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

MESSRS. GRYPHINS, VOGEL, AND WAGNER, three adventurers in Melbourne, Australia, start The Lunar Company, for the Conquest and Exploration of the Mineral Riches of the Moon. "But how are we to get to the moon?" is the question asked by large numbers of stockholders, and at a public meeting Wagner talks learnedly of a tubular tunnel, but has his theory utterly demolished by Norbert Mauny, a young Frenchman, who declares that in order to complete such a piece of work within the stipulated time of five years, it must rise at the rate of 50,000 miles a year!

The assemblage is panic stricken and the stockholders demand their money back, when Mauny calls for order and announces that he has a plan to propose—that of attracting the moon to the earth by erecting a series of powerful magnets. The idea is received with enthusiasm, and Mauny is voted manager of the company. The Bayouda Desert in the Soudan is selected as the site for the erection of the magnets. The expedition sets out at Suakim. Mauny meets the French consul, M. Kersain, and his daughter Gertrude, who decide to accompany him on a visit to the Mogaddem of Rhadameh, a local ruler whose favor must be obtained before the transportation of the material across the desert can be made.

This Mogaddem is a weird sort of personage, and possesses a hideously ugly dwarf. After promising to pay certain large sums as tribute, Norbert secures the coöperation he desires and soon after the return to the seaport, the expedition sets out for the Bayouda Desert. Here the observatories, reflectors, etc., are erected on the Peak of Tehball, and work proceeds with gratifying success till Messrs. Gryphins, Vogel, and Wagner are detected in a conspiracy to turn the workmen against Norbert. They are imprisoned and a guard placed over them, and then Norbert, hearing that trouble threatens Khartoum, where M. Kersain has been transferred, determines to go thither and see if he cannot induce him and his daughter to take refuge at the Peak.

The consul refuses to leave his post, but it is finally arranged that Gertrude, accompanied by Dr. Briet, her uncle, and Fatima, her maid, set out with Norbert for Tehball. On the road they meet a woman fig seller, and shortly after eating some of her fruit a deep sleep falls on all members of the party. On awaking Gertrude discovers that she is in a strange, but beautiful apartment, with only Fatima, who sleeps near her. But presently the hideous dwarf of the Mogaddem of Rhadameh presents himself and offers his hand in marriage. Failing in this he resolves to march with the forces he possesses on the Peak, taking the prisoners with him, and there destroy before their very eyes the work on which Mauny has built such high hopes. But it turns out that the men employed by the young astronomer and those in the service of the dwarf come from the same country, and they refuse to fight against one another. Kaddour is taken captive and placed in charge of Virgil, Mauny's right hand man. Discovered in an attempt to win away the allegiance of the Negro Guard, he is condemned to be shot, but swallows poison just before the execution is to take place. Soon afterward the Mahdi's forces surround the Peak and call upon Mauny to surrender, which he stoutly refuses to do.

Meantime the magnets are working splendidly, and at length Norbert sets in operation the forces that, in six days, are to bring the moon down to the earth. The satellite responds readily, and by the sixth day is so close and appears so immense that not only are the Mahdi's forces utterly panic stricken, but Norbert's party themselves are terrified.

*This story began in the February issue of THE ARGOSY. The four back numbers will be mailed to any address on receipt of 40 cents.

Sir Bucephalus Coghill, one of the chief members of the company, ventures to hint to the young astronomer that he thinks it would be safer for all hands if the experiment be stopped—which Mauny says can be done by simply touching two knobs—when the baronet's valet, Tyrrel Smith, in an agony of apprehension, rushes to the tablet where the knobs controlling all the motors are situated, raises one and lowers another. A fearful crash ensues and all are thrown into insensibility.

When they come to again the astounding discovery is made that the whole mountain of Tehhali, with the observatory and all that it contains, has been transferred to the moon. As soon as he realizes what has happened, Norbert hastens to close and hermetically seal all the windows, in order that no air may escape, as the moon being without atmosphere, man cannot breathe there. However, he provides respirators, with which he and the baronet are enabled to start out on an exploring trip. They find that they cannot make any audible sounds and are obliged to communicate with each other by means of note books.

A far more important discovery, however, is that of an opening into the crater of an extinct volcano, which has become filled with air from the earth. In order to preserve as much of this as possible for future use, Norbert hastens back to the observatory for help and tools, leaving Sir Bucephalus to gather together as many stones as he can for the barricade in the mean time. The whole party accompany the young astronomer on his return, but the baronet has disappeared and cannot be found.

On the return to the observatory the body of the dwarf is discovered exposed to view by the recent catastrophe, and perceiving signs of life in it, Dr. Briet sets to work and soon has Kaddour restored to life, he having forced himself into a state of catalepsy. He is kindly treated by all and sensibly melts under these influences.

CHAPTER XXXII.—THE HISTORY OF KADDOUR.

LITTLE by little the dwarf expanded in this atmosphere of benevolence. But no one could draw a word from him except Briet, who rallied him about his feats of magic.

Then Kaddour, smiling faintly, would condescend to answer in the same strain, as if speaking to another soothsayer. On these occasions he often evinced a marvelous amount of general knowledge. They were all much struck by this fact.

"The fellow," said Briet, "is a perfect mine of knowledge—a veritable cyclopedia. Physics and chemistry, physiology, mathematics, natural history, medicines, living languages, military art—nothing comes amiss to him, and he seems to have gone to the bottom of everything. I am always wondering where he got it all, and I long to ask him; but something or other stops me."

"That is only natural," said Gertrude; "you only feel that, after saving the life of the poor wretch, it would not become you to ask for his history in return, as it were."

"That's it! But," he added, laughing, "it is not that only; I have a vague presentiment that I might be regaled with a yarn, did I venture to ask."

Perhaps the doctor was right on this point. Anyhow, notwithstanding the change that had come over the dwarf, there seemed to be a load upon his mind, preventing him from being at his ease.

A fortunate circumstance soon furnished the clue, however. Talking before Kaddour at table about some iniquitous proceeding of Wagner, Gryphins, and Vogel, Norbert said with more frankness and moderation:

"What a blessing it is, in the midst of our misfortunes, not to have those scoundrels with us!"

At these words Kaddour's eyes flamed. He hesitated an instant, then, turning to Norbert, he said, "Will you allow me to ask you a question, sir?" It was the first time he had ever so spoken. They all looked up.

"Most willingly," answered Norbert. "Pray ask."

"If it is not indiscreet on my part," pursued Kaddour, "I would know whether the parties you have just mentioned are your friends?"

"What persons? Wagner, Gryphins, and Vogel?"

"Especially the two last named," said Kaddour.

"Certainly not; they are by no means my friends."

"But I thought," stammered Kaddour, who seemed strangely upset—"I thought they were your partners."

"To a certain extent they were my partners indeed, but they are, above all things, my sworn enemies, who have omitted nothing that lay in their power to ruin my enterprise."

"Is it possible!" cried Kaddour, rising from his seat. "Ah!" he continued, "I understand it all now. It was they who sent an Arab to denounce your project to the Mogaddem! What a fool I was not to see it before. But," added the dwarf, suddenly stopping short and turning two flaming eyes on Norbert—"but do you not know all about these men whom you permitted to follow you to the Soudan?"

"I know nothing about them," said Norbert. "They are chance associates whom circumstances threw in my way. I neither know nor care whence they came."

"But it shall be my care to tell you who they are!" cried Kaddour, whose emotion almost choked him. "It matters very much to me, for herein lies my sole excuse for the evil things I have done you, and for the evil I would have done! This has been the only bar to my deep gratitude for all your goodness. But how could I guess the truth?"

"You know Gryphins and Vogel?" asked the doctor.

"Do I know them?" cried Kaddour excitedly. "Do I know the two villains who stole from me my share of earthly happiness, and almost destroyed my very form? Do I know the butchers who for fifteen years tortured me in the most dreadful manner, and made me the laughing stock of the world? Yes, indeed, I know them only too well! I hate them to such a point that I would give anything in the world to have them here, were it only for one minute, to pay them off for all they made me suffer!"

There was such a tone of rage in these words that it was impossible to listen to them without shuddering. Yet none of his hearers thought of remonstrating. His grotesque exterior notwithstanding, Kaddour inspired more respect than compassion. The common herd had seen in him a supernatural being on account of his pretended powers, and more enlightened witnesses could not but acknowledge a superior intelligence in him, even while they condemned his charlatanism.

For a moment Kaddour was silent with emotion. Then he resumed:

"I do not suppose that it would interest you to hear the history of my life. You would only pity me for my fearful wrongs, and pity is as abhorrent to me as contempt."

They hastened to assure him of their deep sympathy with his sufferings ; and the doctor especially had the happy idea of laying stress upon his own scientific curiosity. This had the desired effect on Kaddour, who thus proceeded :

" You will be somewhat surprised to learn that I belong to the same nation as yourselves—the French. Not that I have any decided proofs to give, but I have a vague recollection of having been called Charles when I was quite little. I have never known my family name, for parents, country, home (however humble that may have been), were all stolen from me at once, at the outset of my miserable life. I have a conviction, however, that I must have been born in France, from various little incidents and words caught up here and there, and long pondered in secret, and from the fact that the French language came naturally to me. "

" I must have been two or three years old when they carried me off. One day a traveling circus settled down near us. I had been taken to see one of the performances, and from that time my head was filled with the images of clowns, jockeys, horses, and performing dogs. Led by curiosity, I crept on hands and knees under the canvas covering of the tent one day, in order to see my paradise again. I had been there but a few minutes, gazing at the acrobats as they packed up their belongings in readiness to depart, when suddenly a great hand was clapped on my mouth ; I was caught up, carried off, and thrown into a dark corner. After a good cry, I must have fallen asleep. When I awoke I was in one of the moving caravans I had so admired.

" It may, perhaps, surprise you that I should have such a vivid recollection of some things, while others are so vague. I give them to you for what they are worth, for I am not at all certain as to my age at that time, only I look back to these first impressions as to the only bright spot in life. All the cruel tortures have never been able to efface the memory of our sunny little garden, of my mother's kisses, and of my father's cheery laugh.

" Gryphius and Vogel were the proprietors and directors of the traveling circus. They had a wretched dwarf with them as chief attraction. He fell ill. Fearing lest he might die, the scoundrels conceived the diabolical notion of manufacturing a dwarf. I was condemned never to grow. They incased me in a steel corslet that entirely stopped the development of my body ; my limbs were tightly bound in linen bands, as the Chinese women bind their feet.

" The plan was a success, as you may see. But it was not effected without a prodigious outlay of time, and many brutal blows and bitter tears. What did these tigers care ? At the end of a few years I was exhibited in public under the title of General Midgy, ex commander in chief of the Myrmidons of the Sultan of Batavia.

" I will pass over the insults and sufferings that were my daily lot. Yet never can I forget them ! They are too deeply engraved on my memory to be effaced. I was exhibited all over the world, and I learned to hate humanity in every language. The scoundrels who had deformed my body took much money, while I, far from sharing in the profits, was kept in captivity.

"At length the public curiosity began to wane, the profits fell. One day I learned that I had been sold to the Khedive of Egypt, who gave me to his children, just as he would have given them a pony or a clockwork carriage. From that time forward I never saw the infamous authors of my misery until one day on the Peak of Tehbali I met them face to face in this very hall. Long years had gone by. But I need not tell you that my hatred had but grown more intense day by day.

"Living in the palace as if I had been some curious animal, I had yet the opportunity of acquiring knowledge. The Khedive, who was an intelligent man himself, spared nothing for the education of his children. They had the best masters in Europe. I was present at the lessons, and listened attentively, while they yawned.

"In this way I learned history, the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, and languages. I was careful not to let it be perceived that I treasured up the store of learning, lest I might be banished from the study room. It was delightful to feel that the Khedive himself was providing me with the weapons wherewith one day I vowed to wipe out this humiliating bondage.

"My heart grew with my knowledge. I would be revenged, not only on the direct authors of my misery, but on all who were in any way connected with them. I loathed the whole human race. I had dreams of crushing them under my feet one day, when science and strength that comes with knowledge should far outweigh and overshadow the accident of my deformed body!

"Just when I had learned everything that my masters had to teach me, Arabi Pasha planned his revolt. I was one of the first to find it out, and to help him; or, rather, I may say that he was a puppet in my hands. But we were betrayed, and Arabi was exiled to Ceylon, whither I accompanied him.

"Then I enlarged my sphere of action. The revolt had taught me military tactics. Some fakirs near Point de Galle initiated me into secrets that would be all powerful over eastern imaginations. Then it was that I determined to make Mussulman fanaticism—which was even then rampant throughout the Upper Nile—the lever and instrument of my future power. I escaped from Ceylon, and came to Suakim, where I commenced my new career by ingratiating myself with the Mogaddem of Rhadameh, and, for my own ends, doing all in my power to increase his influence.

"The Mahdi was now daily growing in prestige. I turned my eyes to him, feeling sure that he would be easily dazzled by my occult powers, and would be a mere tool in my hands. It was then that I had occasion to come to Tehbali, and there found Gryphins and Vogel. This chance meeting changed the course of my plans. I still intended to conquer the Soudan and Egypt, and by their means the whole Mussulman world, in order to let it loose upon Europe; but, first of all, I wished to be revenged on my tormentors by striking down at once what was conceived to be their enterprise.

"That is why I dogged your footsteps, and had you watched, that I might seize the first favorable opportunity. You know the rest—how I became

your prisoner by a complete turning of the tables, and escaped death only by feigning it. I do not regret my failure, nor the downfall of my schemes. I have learned through misfortune what I did not know before. I do not even regret being a castaway on the moon, since I am with you. I am only sorry that the real authors of my misery and crimes are not here also, in order that I might settle up my account with them."

"Perhaps you may find them again some day on earth!" said Norbert, laughing, in order to make a diversion from the melancholy mood the sad recital had evoked. "We have no reason to conclude that the catastrophe was fatal to those gentlemen, the controlling commissioners; and you do not suppose that we intend to remain here?"

"Yes, let us talk about going," said the doctor, divining Norbert's intention. "Do you seriously think it will be possible?"

"I haven't the least doubt about it," replied the young astronomer, "since we have had the good luck to carry off with us all that is necessary. We have only to put our solar heat condensers into working order again (some of them having been injured by the shock), and to touch up the electric machinery."

"Then why not do it at once?" cried Gertrude excitedly.

"Be sure I shall not prolong our sojourn a day longer than can be helped. It will take fifteen days to put the machines in working order. Meanwhile, the night will be upon us, and the solar heat condensers cannot work until the sun comes back. I have made very close calculations on the point. We have just enough air to last that time on one condition, however: that it may not be wasted, and, especially, we must be very particular not to have any fire of any kind whatever! I say this for the benefit of certain smokers, who burn up at least twenty cubic yards of air for the pleasure of blowing a little smoke out of their nostrils!" added Norbert, looking at Smith and Virgil.

The two culprits hung their heads, and promised reform. They had, probably, not known that a pipe could cost so much.

Smith hid his confusion by bustling about his business at the dining table, and slunk off to the kitchen with a pile of plates under his arm.

Immediately afterwards a tremendous crash of broken crockery was heard, and the unlucky man reappeared, pale and trembling, almost fainting.

"A thief!" he stammered. "A thief, who escaped out of the window when he saw me!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A BATTLE.

NORBERT, Virgil, the doctor, and Kaddour hurried to the storeroom.

No one was there, and the window was closed. But that might have been owing to the draft that blew *from within* whenever it was open.

"What was your thief like?" asked the somewhat incredulous doctor.

"I only saw his back," replied Smith, "and the back looked as if its owner wore a respirator; but it was like an ordinary man's back."

"Very likely!" muttered the doctor. "An ordinary man in the moon! You are dreaming, Smith! Have you been at that bottle of port?"

"Oh, sir!" said the valet. "I have not had a drop this morning—I mean since we rose; for, in this wretched country, one never knows whether it be morning or evening!"

"You are quite sure you saw some one escape through the window?" asked Norbert.

"I am ready to make an affidavit of the fact!" said Smith majestically.

"We will spare you that trouble. But we must sift this matter to the bottom. Two of you come with me while the others keep guard over the observatory."

The doctor and Smith were left in the Hall of Motors. Having provided themselves with firearms and donned their respirators, the three went out by the window.

This window gave access to the turning to the right that branched off the circular passage, and it looked on to the building that had done duty as the lodging of the controlling commissioners and the prison of Kaddour. This building had no direct communication with the interior of the observatory, and hence it had been overlooked lately. Norbert remembered that it must contain a small supply of air; and as such a commodity was in no wise to be despised he went straight to the door.

Just as he touched it a shot was fired through a circular opening. It burnt his hair without doing him further injury. The ball lodged in the wall, and knocked several splinters off it.

"The enemy is there!" said Norbert to his companions, as he stood up close against the wall, signing them to do the same.

The precaution was not useless. Two more shots succeeded the first.

Virgil would not wait any longer; he threw himself on the door and tried to burst it open. But it was locked and perhaps barricaded on the inside. It was impossible to break it in.

"There is only one thing to be done," he said, in a low voice. "Let us slip behind the outer wall, and, getting on the top, fire at the windows."

The advice was too good not to be followed. In less than three minutes the three had climbed up the outer wall by the slope. They lay down on their faces on the dry grass and opened a well sustained fire from their breech loaders. The windows and woodwork were shivered to pieces; but no one replied.

"They are watching for us to uncover that they may take aim at us!" said the experienced Virgil. "But we know a trick worth two of that, my fine fellows! You shall uncover first!"

Seeing that no appreciable effect was produced, Norbert ordered them to fire on the door. It flew into pieces at the third shot.

"To the breach!" shouted Norbert, sliding down the slope, Virgil and Kaddour with him.

There was no one! The besieged had vanished. Doubtless they must have taken refuge in the adjoining room. Norbert fired, therefore, at the second door.

"If they are ordinary men they must capitulate for want of air," said the young astronomer.

This opinion was corroborated by the instant appearance of a white handkerchief, suspended by a bayonet, through the second breach. Even on the moon a white handkerchief is the signal for a truce.

"Stop firing, Virgil, and host your handkerchief."

Virgil obeyed.

The door then opened, and on its threshold stood the last person in the world whom they expected to see—Sir Bucephalus Coghill!

Thin, pale, and tottering, he was but the shadow of himself. But it was he without a doubt.

"It was you, then, who greeted us with a volley?" asked Norbert, intensely surprised.

The baronet sadly bowed his head without a word. Another voice answered for him, and this voice was strangely like that of Costerus Wagner.

"We ask to treat!" it said, without the owner of the voice appearing. He was probably sheltering himself behind the baronet.

"Who are you?"

"You know us well," replied the voice. "We are Costerus Wagner, Peter Gryphins, and Ignaz Vogel."

The dwarf suddenly gave vent to a cry of joy.

"How happens it that you are there, and why did you fire upon us?" asked Norbert, lost in amazement.

"It does not much matter," replied the voice. "It will all be explained. But time presses, and we shall soon be without air."

"Surrender, in that case."

"Not without conditions."

"What conditions do you expect?"

"Our lives, air, and provisions."

"You shall have your lives," replied Norbert. "But air and rations are another point. They are too precious here to be wasted on three rascals."

"Then our prisoner shall suffer for it," savagely replied the voice.

"What prisoner?"

"Sir Bucephalus Coghill."

"Is that true?" asked Norbert of the baronet.

His unhappy friend nodded his head. It needed nothing more to decide Norbert.

"Listen," he said, "to the only conditions I will grant. You shall have your lives, air, and rations; but you shall remain prisoners in the quarters assigned to you, and you must work for the common welfare, under my directions."

"Agreed!" said three eager voices, which were unmistakably those of Wagner, Gryphins, and Vogel.

"Well, then, throw down your arms and stand forward; you have my word."

At that moment something cold touched his hand, and, looking round, he saw Kaddour on his knees, kissing it.

"Oh, Monsieur Mauny, give them to me!" said he beseechingly.

"What do you want me to give you?"

"Give me these wretches, that I may punish them as they deserve!"

"I should be most happy to hand them over to you," answered Norbert, "but I have passed my word to them, and I cannot withdraw it."

CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE PRISONERS.

THE three commissioners presented a most miserable aspect. They were emaciated, haggard, and dirty.

They were as abject now as hitherto they had been arrogant. The firearms in their possession proved to be those that had been missed from the observatory the first day the castaways had sallied forth to reconnoiter.

Norbert would not speak to them himself, but commissioned Virgil to see to their wants, and carried off the poor baronet to the drawing room. He was soon restored by a few puffs of pure oxygen. He then related his adventures, and explained the presence on the moon of the three scoundrels.

"When you left me at the opening of the crater," he said, addressing himself to Norbert, "I soon got tired of picking up stones, and thought how the work would be done in five minutes when help came. The sight of the Apennines on the right was very tempting. I longed to climb them, and have something to tell when I return to London, if I ever do return.

"I yielded to the strong temptation, and in about an hour's time I had climbed the nearest peak, erected a little commemorative obelisk at the top, and descended the dried up bed of the torrent into the plain. I was then quietly returning up Tehbali, when suddenly three shadows bounded from behind a big rock, threw me down, and seized my box of oxygen.

"By good fortune there was just a little breathable air in the gorge at the bottom of the deep valley. I don't know where the air came from, but there it was, and it kept me alive, as until then it had kept the three rogues alive. It appears that the glass foundry which was their prison at the bottom of the peak was carried off with us, and fell into this gorge, where indeed I saw the broken pieces of glass."

"So did we," said Norbert, "when we were searching for you."

"You saw them too, did you? Well, Wagner, who is more knave than fool, understood the position at once, aided thereto by the fact that he could not breathe outside the valley. The villains had no provisions. They saw the observatory in the distance, and knew that we were there, but they could not traverse the intervening space owing to their want of oxygen.

"In this juncture they suddenly perceived me climbing up the Apennines, and conceived the idea of awaiting my return to pounce at once upon me and my box of oxygen. Equipped with my respirator, Wagner started off directly to reconnoiter, and finding the observatory deserted he took the opportunity of visiting the store room, and threw out of the window every eatable he could lay his hands on, besides three respirators which you have not perhaps missed."

"I beg your pardon, I noticed their absence at once, but ventured to suppose that you must have taken them, in order to prolong your escapade," said Norbert.

"See how one is calumniated ! In short, Wagner returned, and led us around Tehbali on the opposite side of the zigzag road, and brought us to the commissioners' old quarters. You must bear in mind that all this time my arms were tied to the rifle. It was impossible for me to call out, since there is no sound in this confounded land. We reached the place where you found us, and have been here ever since—I with my feet and wrists bound, and threatened with death if I tried to escape. I think they intended to attack you in your sleep, and get possession of the observatory. But they had not sufficient firearms ; that was why Costerus made that attempt on the store-room during your breakfast. He was discovered in time, luckily for us all."

As the baronet ended his recital his voice suddenly fell, and his eyes opened wide with an expression of utter stupefaction. He had just caught sight of Kaddour, whom he had not noticed before. His amazement at beholding him in life whom he had seen in death was only equaled by the surprise with which he noted the familiar terms on which the dwarf evidently was with the inhabitants of the Hall of Motors.

They explained matters to him, however, and he ended by trusting to the evidence of his senses that Kaddour really had risen again.

Virgil, meanwhile, was concerning himself with settling the prisoners as quickly as possible. He had cleverly repaired the broken windows and the smashed door, and had made a hole in the wall for the purpose of communicating with the circular gallery of the observatory, where the aërating well was. This secured a fair amount of breathable air to the three commissioners, and a cistern full of water was assigned to them, as well as daily rations of food.

Norbert gave them his written instructions as to the amount of labor he required from them. It consisted of repairing and polishing a certain number of conical mirrors that had been injured by the catastrophe and rendered unfit for use. Norbert was rather disturbed in his calculations by this sudden increase in the number of inhabitants, for it meant a larger consumption of air and provisions.

"I had calculated," he said with a sigh, "on a sufficient supply of air for *eight* persons during twenty two days. I can only count upon enough for sixteen days, since there will be *eleven* pairs of lungs to fill. We shall be obliged, before the end, to make large quantities of oxygen."

"All the more reason to get rid of these rogues !" cried Kaddour. He had been as restless as an angry tiger ever since his tormentors had appeared on the scene. "Give them to me, Monsieur Mauny ; give them to me for two or three hours, and I undertake to suppress them in due form. You will be able to keep your air for those who have a right to it."

But Norbert took the trouble to explain to Kaddour that such sentiments were both cruel and revolting.

"Revolting !" cried the dwarf, writhing as if under a hot iron. "I should like to see what you would say if *you* had been kept in a metallic mold for fifteen years, and transformed into a monster !"

"True," answered Norbert, trying to appease the little creature. "But

you must remember, Kaddour, that your wrongs are not ours, and that we cannot feel quite as you do about these wretches !”

The dwarf acknowledged the justice of this remark, and promised to restrain himself ; but this was only a change of tactics on his part, and he asked that at least he might be allowed to take charge of the prisoners.

“ You don't know them,” he said. “ They will play you some trick yet. They are scoundrels in every sense of the word, and must not be lost sight of for an instant.”

“ Virgil will look after them,” replied Norbert. “ You would be a bad jailer, Kaddour. If you want to prove your friendship to me, as you say and as I believe, never mention them again.”

CHAPTER XXXV.—A FRAGMENT FROM GERTRUDE'S JOURNAL.

“ We have now spent six times twenty four hours on the moon ; I could just as well believe it to have been six months if M. Mauny said so. One does not know what to expect about anything in this strange world ! A day of a hundred and forty four hours, with no apparent reason why it should come to an end even then, gives a new meaning to the word *interminable* !

“ Oh, night, what would we not give to greet thee again as of old ! How little do our endless *siestas* here resemble the regular sleep that we enjoyed on the earth ! But I suppose we must expect some drawbacks in such a glorious enterprise as this !

“ I shall go on with my journal. I began it for my dear father, and it is the only thing now that seems to bring me a little nearer to him. Poor father ! What, I wonder, is he doing ? Why is he not with us, instead of being shut up in Khartoum ? He must find it almost as hot as this, and perhaps matters are worse there ! Poor father ! When shall we meet again ? I will at least write down my selenic experiences day by day for him to read, if we ever have the happiness of being together again.

“ My uncle calls this life here a selenic existence ! The word only means lunar ; but it sounds better. Anyhow, this existence is both monotonous and strange. I am obliged to bite my finger at times to make sure that I am not in a dream. Every morning when I wake, after some hours of sleep in the artificial night of my room, it takes five minutes and Fatima's solemn assertion to convince me that I am really on the moon. But, alas ! I am obliged to acknowledge it at last, and then I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

“ It is like being on board a large vessel, except that one cannot go and take a turn on the bridge, for the few steps we are able to take on the esplanade, thanks to those miserable boxes of oxygen, are not worth mentioning. The first time I went out I thought it rather amusing to breathe in jerks, just as one drinks, and to get over the ground by leaps like a grasshopper. But in the long run it is tiring. A breath of sea air would be much nicer, especially if I had dear papa's arm !

“ Mr. Mauny is the only one among us who enjoys being out. He went off again this morning—or rather, I should say, after breakfast—on a new

expedition. He has gone to visit the other hemisphere of the moon, the one that the earth has never seen and will never see.

"It is somewhat curious that the moon should always turn one side only to us, and never the other.' It seems absurd when one first hears it. Yet after all it is only natural, since she accompanies us in our annual journey round the sun. She is like a child walking round a merry-go-round, and keeping her face always turned to the man who grinds the central organ; the riders of the wooden horses lose sight of the child from time to time, but whenever they do meet her it is always face to face. M. Mauny gave me this explanation.

"Well, to return to him. He has undertaken to visit that side of the moon that no man has seen yet, not even with a telescope. We should not have minded being of the party, but he would not let us go. He said first that it was too far, being nine hundred miles off, and that it would take him at least forty eight hours to go and return. Then he said that the cold there would be terrible on account of the lunar night now prevailing; and, lastly, that he was obliged to take an extra allowance of oxygen, which it would be difficult to manage if we were to go too.

"He went alone, with Kaddour and a perfect museum of telescopes, retorts, and all sorts of instruments. I can hear you saying, 'What! take such a journey in forty eight hours, across a country devoid of railroads, or even roads? Impossible!' He is of a contrary opinion. He says he has made his calculations, and that it will take him eighteen hours to go (at the rate of fifty miles an hour); eighteen hours to return, allowing twelve to rest and take observations or notes. A journey on the moon, remember, is made with seven league boots.

"All the same, I wish he were back. What would become of us if anything happened to him? Don't think I speak selfishly, dear papa; you know whom I am thinking of when I say, 'What will become of us?' The baronet certainly would not be able to get us out of this and take us home. Poor Sir Bucephalus! He is beginning to get over his captivity somewhat, but he was in a sad condition at first.

"I was saying it was like being in a big steamer. Our life is as regular. Every twelve hours we sleep. On awaking, which we call morning, the doctor goes his professional rounds; sees that the aëration is good and the ventilators doing their work. He even extends his care to the three miscreants in the prison; you know how every human being is, in his eyes, equal! On his return, we breakfast; then I give Fatima her lesson, or learn my own. I am so glad to have the dear child with me, and I love her more and more every day. You will find that my pupil does me credit. She is wonderfully docile, and succeeds in everything she undertakes.

"For instance, she is the best of all of us at the deaf and dumb language taught us by my uncle. Fatima is at the head of the class after M. Mauny. Already they converse by signs with Kaddour, who sets up for being quite an adept. Yesterday he held forth on the subject of what he terms the *General Grammar of Gestures*. He is certainly making fun of us, but he himself is the most ridiculous object on the moon! He will have it that it is the

greatest mistake to bring up the deaf mute to express a particular vocabulary by signs; he says there is a universal language of gestures, which is the same in every land, and is, perhaps, the primitive language of humanity; and that this is the language that should be taught, not only to deaf mutes, but to children in general, in order that they may thus possess a universal idiom.

"Virgil is invaluable. He is at present overseer of works; he is superintending the repairing of the solar heat condensers on which the prisoners are engaged. My uncle and M. Mauny keep the electrical apparatus to themselves. I suspect that M. Norbert has kept to himself alone the secret of the terminals, for fear of some accident happening, such as that fatal escapade of Smith's. Fatima and I spend three hours every day in making stuff bands, which are to play their part, I am told, in our homeward journey.

"No one here is idle except the model valet; and perhaps that is because they do not want him to lose the habit. But Smith can make very nice preserved turtle soup.

"Sir Bucephalus will have it that he is here against his will; that he took no measures to get here, and never believed, indeed, that the expedition would succeed. He says M. Mauny must get him out of it.

"M. Mauny is the only one who is thoroughly satisfied. He says that the moon is the paradise of astronomers, and the finest observatory in space; that he would willingly pass two or three years here, and is so sorry that the lack of air necessitates our speedy departure. He can hardly tear himself from his telescopes, even in the daytime. I don't know what it will be when night comes—the long night so favorable to astronomical research! He will have some valuable notes of this lunar excursion, I imagine."

CHAPTER XXXVI.—THE JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"FOUR hours later.—I have been interrupted in my daily chat with you, dear papa, by uncle, who came to invite me to go out with him and Sir Bucephalus. You know how, ever since we came here, uncle has had a craving to find some vegetable substance, even if only a little moss or a blade of grass. He says it would be the greatest prize in his collection of herbs, and would make him famous.

"He has already fixed upon a name for this precious vegetable; it is to be called *Brieta maxima* or *parvula*, according to its size, unless, indeed, it has to be simply *Brieta selenensis*. But, sad to say, we have not as yet found a single plant. Uncle is not discouraged, however, and we are now going out to hunt again. He declares also that the air of the moon (for want of a more exact expression) does me a great deal of good, and I ought to take exercise every day, even in this climate, where fatigue is unknown.

"We started, therefore, in the best of humors. We descended the dried up torrent from the Apennines, which were so nearly fatal to Sir Bucephalus. He pointed out to us the spot where the three conspirators awaited him to steal his oxygen respirator, and I can assure you his tragic attitudes whilst

describing the affair did good duty for speech. By the by, we found no air left in the torrent, which proves the truth of M. Mauny's theory: the air that was there for a few hours was only a quantity of terrestrial air.

"Leaving to our right the summit already explored by the baronet and M. Mauny, we continued our way down the long yellow valley till we came to another gorge much deeper toward the south. There we found a coal vein level with the ground. The baronet stood and looked at it for some little time, thinking doubtless what a treasure it would be if close to London. But uncle and I did not take much interest in it, so we pursued our way, getting over the ground, be it remembered, by leaps of ten or twelve yards at a time, and doing fifteen leagues an hour at least.

"Suddenly uncle stopped short. He stooped over, knelt down, tore a magnifying glass out of his pocket, and set himself to a steady examination of a sort of little green moss scarcely visible on the back of a blue pebble. He got up at last in a state of lively emotion, and beckoned me to come and look. Well, dear papa, we had made a discovery! The *Brieta parvula* lay before us. Oh! it was very *parvula* indeed! A miserable scrap of moss, hardly perceptible, that I should have passed by a hundred times, or have taken for a bit of the lava round about.

"Uncle was quite delighted, and it was a pleasure to see him so overjoyed. He shook hauds with me, and we congratulated each other by signs.

"After a quarter of an hour spent thus, I began to think the *Brieta* had had enough attention, and as uncle did not seem disposed to move, and looked indeed as if he would like to take root beside his pebble, I made him a sign that I was going to the foot of the mountain, and would come back for him.

"Some secret instinct of coming glory must have impelled me surely; for I had not taken two steps beyond a little spur of the Apennines that marked a gloomy valley, when an unexpected sight met my eyes! I stood before an immense excavation that had evidently been *dug* out of the rock by human, or rather superhuman hands.

"There was no doubt about it; what I saw before me was no freak of nature, but most certainly the work of creatures as powerful as they must have been intelligent! A gigantic staircase of admirable proportions led by gently sloping wide steps to a vestibule, supported by pillars worthy of the Cyclops. They were four or five times loftier and larger than those of the colonnade of St. Peter's at Rome, and they were chiseled out of a single block of malachite, and upheld the whole front of the mountain itself.

"The vestibule led into a court that appeared seven or eight times larger than that of the Coliseum; it was roofed over, and lighted here and there by small oval windows. The whole was grand, lofty, and elegant beyond description. We saw nothing like it in Egypt, dear papa, nor on the Upper Nile, nor even at Nineveh. Gigantic monsters cut out of granite guarded the entrance to the court. The walls were decorated with frescoes and highly colored paintings.

"I tore myself away at last, and hastened to communicate to the others the discovery of these marvels. I found uncle still poring over the *Brieta*

parvula, and the baronet with him. With much difficulty I prevailed on them to follow me. When they saw the building, their astonishment and delight knew no bounds. Uncle tore a page out of his note book, and wrote :

"My dear Gertrude, you are the first to discover a selenic monument, and thus to place beyond the shadow of a doubt the fact that the Moon has been inhabited. It is a more important discovery than any archæology has made in our days."

"I did not understand very well at first why the discovery was thus important. But when I had thought about it, whilst Sir Bucephalus and uncle examined the mural decorations, I saw that such a monument must have been the work, not only of intelligent beings, but also of beings who had arrived at a high degree of civilization.

"For just as you said, speaking of the Pyramids, the very cutting and lifting of such gigantic stones is evidence that the workmen must have had a profound knowledge of mathematics and the allied sciences. So now a doubtful matter is cleared up for us all. The dead Moon was inhabited, and the inhabitants must have been experienced architects and engineers. What a privilege, dear papa, to have been the instrument of such a grand discovery !

"On our return to the observatory uncle lost his high spirits. When he came to examine his *Brieta parvula* under the microscope, it turned out to be identical with a terrestrial plant whose name I forget, but which is most common in polar regions ; and this is, moreover, only a stunted specimen of the kind. Poor uncle is dreadfully disappointed.

"It was in vain that I tried to console him by telling him that, at all events, it was the sole vegetable left upon the Moon. He answered that nothing but an absolutely new species would be accepted in the way of proof by terrestrial botanists ; that they would look with suspicion on the origin of the *Brieta*, and say that we had brought it here with our mountain. Uncle believes his colleagues capable of anything in order to decry original work."

A. Laurie.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE HERO.

A Ball Room Ballad.

HE looked so handsome, proud, and brave
As he stood there, straight and tall,
With his steadfast eyes so gray, so grave,
The beau of the Hunt Club ball.

Ah me ! Full many a white breast sighed
For the favor in his hand—
For the love of heart so true, so tried,
For life—you understand.

He looked a hero—he was more,
A martyr, too, perchance,
For he went to the oldest girl on the floor
And led her out to dance.

A CONSPIRACY OF THE CATACOMBS.

The adventure that befell an American tourist who sought an escape from beaten paths—A rescue from the horrors of starvation succeeded by a peril which causes keen suspense, and which is thought to be safely conquered when it again confronts the victim with a tragic fate.

WHEN Walter Safford was abroad he despised the hackneyed haunts of tourists and had a holy horror of excursions planned by Baedeker. He regarded the conscientious sightseeing practised by most Americans as proof of a prosaic if not a vulgar mind. It was his habit to follow the bent of his own fancy and happen on the usual things by chance, if at all. It was this idiosyncrasy that led him into a very foolish trip to the catacombs in Rome. These subterranean passages extend for miles, following no regular plan, but branching and intersecting at random. They all look exactly alike, and even the occasional chapels, where the early Christians held their services and buried their dead secure from pagan persecution, have little to distinguish them one from another. No trackless forest or fabled labyrinth could be more confusing than this network of dark, damp, indistinguishable burrowings.

Well knowing the character of the catacombs and the number of unfortunates who have gone astray and starved to death there, the paternal Italian government has sealed up all the entrances to the underground city but one, and that one is strictly guarded. At stated times an official guide conducts parties through this entrance. No one is allowed to enter except so attended. Even then, the guide takes his parties over a very short and stereotyped route, mistakes on his part being made impossible by having every passageway roped across except the one he is to follow.

Now that was the sort of thing Walter Safford specially abhorred, so he resolved, unless chance favored him, to let these underground attractions alone. But chance did favor him. An old peasant with whom he was chatting in the Campagna told him how a washout and cave-in on his farm the night before had opened up the catacombs. A small gratuity easily induced him to point out the place. Safford was enchanted. Here was an entrance all his own to an absolutely unexplored region. He laid in a stock of matches and candles, put a compass in his pocket, and by means of a rope, swung himself down. He started on his explorations in the highest spirits.

"All I have to do is to keep in one line, say straight north, and when I turn around I will go straight south, which must infallibly bring me back."

Of course the passages did not run exactly that way, so he took the one that led *nearest* north at each branching. He walked for an hour, stopping a few minutes to examine a crude bit of frescoing on a chapel wall and a sar-

cophagus containing some bones that crumbled to dust at his touch. Then he turned around and proceeded to retrace his steps. When he had walked an hour and a half without arriving at the starting point he knew that somehow he had gone astray. Then he turned back to find the place from which he had branched off. The little chapel with its frescoes and sarcophagus was the only point on the route he could identify. He had passed through it on his return trip. If he could get back there then and begin afresh, he would probably get on the right track.

This, however, was just what he did not succeed in doing. When his watch told him that he had wandered for eight hours without coming across either the entrance or the chapel, he sat down to consider. Should he continue to hunt for his lost starting place or should he strike out boldly for the government entrance, which he knew to be about three miles northwest of the washout? He decided in favor of the latter as being the larger mark, since if he could find any part of the rope enclosed passage he would be safe.

He trudged doggedly toward the northwest till he knew by the time that had elapsed he must have walked at least ten miles. Then he sank down in complete exhaustion and put out his candle for economy's sake. His supply was nearly out. He will remember to his dying day the horrors of the time that followed. He slept a few hours from utter weariness, and awoke chilled to the bone by the damp stone on which he was lying. The heavy subterranean air almost suffocated him. The darkness was full of mysterious horrors. Strange sounds, which might proceed from the scurrying feet of a rat or the flap of a bat's wings, disturbed the awful stillness. When he put his hand down it came in contact with crawling, slimy things. He lit his candle and breathed freer. Anything is bearable with light.

"If I only had enough caudles to last till I die!" he thought. "But they will be gone in a few hours, and it will take me several days to starve at best, perhaps a week——" and he shuddered.

He stumbled on aimlessly till the light was gone. The last flicker of the last candle showed him that it was near noon of the second day. He had some matches left, but kept them for an emergency. He had picked out as dry a place as possible and sat down to await the end. Every once in a while he would get up in desperation and walk blindly till he was tired, groping his way along the damp wall. At last (about the middle of the second night) his hand struck something different—a bit of carving. The eager hand fell on—a sarcophagus! The top is off. Crumbling bones were inside. Struggling between hope and fear, Safford struck a match. Thank God! It was his chapel! The entrance was not a quarter of a mile away, as near due south as might be.

The excess of his joy combined with his physical weakness (he had been two days and two nights without food) was too much for him. He sank down and wept like a child. When he had somewhat recovered himself, he set to work manufacturing a torch out of the more combustible parts of his clothing. The first one lasted some minutes, during which he felt confident he had found the place at which he had first gone astray. Another similar

torch guided him on his way till he came to a standstill, about the time he thought he must be almost at the entrance, before a mound of earth. There was no getting around it. It filled the passageway completely from side to side, from roof to roof. For a moment he thought he had somehow lost himself again. Then the truth dawned on him. This was his entrance! It had been discovered and filled in by the authorities!

The despair that followed was all the worse for the delusive hope that had visited him. The temptation was stroug to cut a vein with his penknife and end it all by bleeding to death. This he managed to resist and even made some feeble efforts to dig his way out to the surface. But there were twenty or thirty feet of well packed earth between him and the upper world. He had no implement but his hands and a penknife, and his strength was almost spent. The time passed, he knew not how. Sometimes he was mercifully unconscious. Sometimes the tortures of hunger and thirst became poignant enough to arouse him for a short time from his lethargy.

It was on the third day—it might have been the thirteenth so far as he knew at the time—that he suddenly became conscious of human voices. He thought it merely another hallucination—he had had many—and kept quiet. A voice said in Italian,

“Here at last we are safe from spies and eavesdroppers!”

“Thanks be to the saints, yes!” said another. “We may now arrange the details of the tyrant’s death.”

By this time Safford had raised himself on his elbow with new found strength and alertness. These were no airy phantasms. They were live men’s voices. But the character of the few words he had heard made him hesitate to call out. What followed made him glad he had held his peace. They were planning nothing less than the assassination of the king. It was evident that lots had been drawn at some previous time, and that the designated assassin was now receiving his final instructions from a sort of executive committee, and especially from a man with a well modulated voice whom they called “excellency.” The date of the crime was set for nine days thence, when it was known that King Humbert would attend high mass at St. Peter’s. The assassin was to meet him as he came out of the church and present a petition, and take advantage of the king’s eyes being on the paper to deal a sudden knife thrust at his heart. The assassin chosen was evidently a Sicilian, and his knife thrust was regarded as sure. It would be death for him also, but his remarks showed that he was prepared for what he called the crown of martyrdom.

For an hour Safford lay and listened. Then he heard the conspirators rise to go. In an agony of horror at being left alone to die he uttered an inarticulate cry.

“Listen; what was that?”

“It was some spirit of the dead!” cried one.

“Or the devil himself,” suggested another.

“No such luck,” came the deep voice of the man who was called “excellency.” “It’s a man, and we must find and silence him if we don’t want to be betrayed.”

Safford heard them coming towards him, and fairly shook with fear, for he had not the slightest doubt that they would murder him. Suddenly an idea occurred to him. It was only a chance, one in a thousand, but he grasped at it eagerly. He would pretend not to understand Italian.

The footsteps began to grow more distant. They were going the wrong way. Summoning all his strength, Safford cried in English :

" Help ! Help ! I am lost. Don't abandon me, good people, for the love of Heaven ! "

The men halted.

" What's that gibberish ? " one asked.

" It's English, " said the leader. " Apparently some fool of a foreigner has lost his way. Perhaps, after all, he did not hear us, and did not understand. "

" We'll run no risks, " growled he to whom the assassin's lot had fallen.

" That's right, " chimed in another, " best take no chances. You can't trust these foreign demons. It may be a spy. "

" Then why should he call us, when we were going away from him ? " said the leader gruffly. " Stick to what you understand, and leave this to me. "

The men grumbled, but obeyed. A moment later they came upon Safford, and flashed their lanterns on his eyes. The haggard lines of the face, hollow eyes, sunken cheeks, and hue of death convinced them that he was there against his will, not an intentional spy—but had he understood ?

" What are you doing here, sir ? " said the leader of the conspirators, addressing Safford in fairly correct English.

Safford told his story in the fewest possible words, for he had little breath to spare. What he had he spent in begging for food and water. One of the men had a biscuit in his pocket and another had a flask of whisky. The wolfish way in which poor Safford fell on these refreshments moved the little band of assassins to expressions of wonder and pity.

" Don't you understand a single word of Italian ? " said the leader suddenly in that language.

Safford checked the " No " that was almost out, and substituted " Did you speak to me ? " After that he was on his guard, and though several more attempts were made to trap him into showing some understanding of the language, he succeeded in not betraying himself.

" Well, " said the leader, turning to his comrades, " what say you ? I feel sure this man is harmless. Shall we rescue him ? His life saved will atone for that other life we feel called on to sacrifice. Unnecessary bloodshed is no part of our purpose. "

" It shall be as you decide, excellency. Nevertheless, it seems unwise to me to risk the success of our enterprise, ever so little, for the sake of this foreigner who is three quarters dead already. "

It was hard indeed for Safford to keep his face perfectly expressionless while his fate was being discussed. Quite a hot dispute arose over him, but the leader gave the final word in his favor.

" Give me your attention one moment, I pray, sir, " his excellency said, turning again to Safford. " We belong to a club of philosophers—a debating

club, I think you call it—of somewhat advanced views for this country. In your so happy land of the free, we should meet and discuss in the open, and all would praise us. Here we must hide underground for fear of the police. I am sure we have your sympathy. Now you tell me you do not understand Italian. There is nothing strange in that. Most of your countrymen have the same lack. But because of our position you will see that we must observe great caution. You will therefore be watched. Our society is large. You need have no uneasiness. If you are what you represent yourself, it will be quickly shown. But if, for instance, we should learn that you do speak Italian, then we should know that you have deceived us and must be a spy sent by the police. And it might fare ill with you. Our people have hot heads."

Safford did not flinch, but accepted the conditions with apparent cheerfulness.

He was too weak to walk, so two of the conspirators carried him between them.

They proceeded thus for a long distance—miles it seemed to Safford—finding their way by marks on the wall, so slight as to be hardly noticeable. At last they reached a staircase with a trap door at the top, which being opened admitted them to the cellar of a house. They gave Safford food and water and treated him with considerable kindness. When he seemed to be sufficiently revived, a cab was sent for and he was helped into it.

"Good luck, my friend," said his excellency with a courteous bow. "It goes without saying that you are not to mention your meeting with us. Perhaps, since people would wonder how you escaped, you had better not refer to your trip to the catacombs at all. I don't think our watchers will bother you. You will hardly be aware of them. They are everywhere. It might be the friend you meet in the street, the boy who waits on you at the table, or the old woman who sells you a nosegay. We have wide ramifications. Delighted to have served you! The driver awaits his directions."

"If you would add to your other kindnesses by telling him to drive me to No. 305 via Torino, I should be deeply obliged."

His excellency gave the desired directions, and Safford breathed freer as the cab drove off.

Not that his difficulties were over by any means. He had not dared give his true address, for he had lodgings with a worthy widow who spoke no word but Italian, and whom he had known for years. His knowledge of Italian would be straightway betrayed if he went there. Even if he felt sure enough of his landlady to take her into his confidence, there were the servants, the other lodgers, the children next door, the chestnut vender at the corner. They all knew him and all would hail him as an old friend in Italian.

He had therefore given the address of an English *pension* where he was not personally known and where he devoutly trusted he would find a vacant room. Of course if the conspirators' spies chose to inquire, they would find out that was not his previous residence, but this seemed to him the lesser risk.

The prim English spinster who presided over the establishment looked

somewhat askance at the seedy individual without baggage who wanted a room immediately, but as Safford fortunately had enough money in his pocket to pay a week's board in advance, he was allowed to stay.

The next two days he spent for the most part in bed, going out only after dark to make a few purchases absolutely necessary to his comfort, lest he should run across one of his numerous Roman acquaintances. Meantime, fearing that his landlady would become alarmed at his absence and raise such a hue and cry as to reach the ears of the conspirators, Safford wrote her that he had been unexpectedly called out of town and asked her to pack his belongings and express them to him in Florence. It was his intention to follow them himself as soon as he was able to stand the journey.

As his physical strength came back to him, he became more and more disturbed by the secret to which he had fallen heir, and revolved various plans for saving the king without sacrificing himself. He did not dare hold any direct communication with the Italian authorities, for knowing he was watched, he felt confident he would be murdered or kidnapped before he had a chance to tell his story. He finally decided to go to the American consul and lay the case before him.

"From there he intended driving direct to the station, taking the train for Florence, and shaking the dust of the eternal city from his feet.

The consul, who did not know him personally, did not seem very much impressed by the story. He consented, however, to send for a notary to take down Safford's deposition and promised to place it without delay in the hands of the authorities.

Glancing at his watch as he went out, he saw he had barely time to catch the Florentine train.

"Drive to the station as fast as you can," he cried to the driver, jumping into the carriage.

He was not fairly seated before he became aware that something was wrong. This was not his carriage. Neither was it like any carriage he had ever seen. It had no windows! He tried the doors, and was scarcely surprised to find them locked. He shouted at the top of his voice for assistance. But since he could hear none of the noises of the street, it was not likely his cries would reach the outside world. He thumped and pounded in all directions, but nothing gave way. There was no escape. He was securely trapped.

They were moving rapidly. This much they could tell by the jolts. Safford had no doubt that he was traveling to his death. The drive seemed eternal. It really lasted a couple of hours—no short time to one in Safford's frame of mind.

When the carriage stopped and the door was opened, a pistol was placed at his head, he was blindfolded and led by the hand. It was already night, so he had seen nothing in the interval before his eyes were bandaged, but the extreme freshness and coolness of the air convinced him that he was not only in the country, but on a hill top. He was led into a house, evidently a spacious one from the size of the rooms traversed, and finally down a flight of stone steps. Some one gave him a little push, the men who led

him ran back up the stairs, the door at the top slammed to, and a bolt grated harshly.

Safford pulled the baudage from his eyes. He was in absolute darkness. He moved about very cautiously until he came to the wall—a damp stone wall. He followed it around, and found himself in a room about ten feet square and six feet high, paved, ceiled, and walled with stone, with no window and no door save the one at the top of the stairs. It was a dungeon. But where? Why? He took some comfort in the fact that he had not yet been killed, for if he was doomed to die, he saw no reason for delay.

The long hours of the night dragged with sickening slowness. There was nothing to mark the day when it came, for no ray of light entered the dungeon, till the door was opened for a moment, and a tray of not unappetizing food set inside. Not long afterwards the door was again unbolting, and the tray removed. Then the chief conspirator entered.

"I am truly grieved to have caused you so much inconvenience, my friend," he said suavely, "but you will admit your actions have been somewhat suspicious."

"I admit nothing of the sort," said Safford, who had thought over beforehand what he would say in just such circumstances.

"Why did you visit the American consul?"

"To get my mail. My letters are addressed in his care."

"Hm! That is not impossible. But why did you go to a house that was not your previous abode when you left us the other day?"

This was what Safford most feared, but he was prepared for this also.

"I had no previous abode. I got into Rome in the early morning. I came for the express purpose of exploring the catacombs. I intended to devote the day to that, and go in the evening to the English *pension*."

"Where is your baggage?"

"In Florence. I was just on my way to the train to return there when I was carried off by your people." It was a luxury to be able to tell the truth.

His excellency mused for a moment. Safford, seeing his advantage, went on boldly.

"It appears to me that this has been a very high handed proceeding, and that the explanation is due not from me to you, but from you to me."

"It may be so," assented the other. "Will you kindly show me the letters you received at the consul's? They must be with you."

"I was disappointed. There was no mail for me."

"It took you some time to find that out. An hour's call to inquire for mail, and learn there is none!"

"Sir," said Safford, rather testily, "since you must needs pry into all my private affairs, I will tell you that I found to my surprise that the consul was a college classmate of my father's. He asked me to sit down, and we spent so long talking over home friends that I feared I had lost my train."

"Yes, I know about that. And the notary?"

"What notary?"

"The notary at the consul's."

"I know nothing about him."

"He was sent for and went in while you were there."

Safford shrugged his shoulders.

"I tell you I know nothing of it. But stay! The consul did excuse himself and leave the room for a few minutes on a matter of business. It might have been that. I do not know."

"Well," said his excellency slowly, "you are very plausible, my young friend, and I confess I have taken a fancy to you, but in justice to others I do not dare set you free just yet. The evidence is strong against you. In the course of a week it will be proved whether or no you are a traitor. If it all turns out as I hope, you shall be treated like a prince and sent on your way to Florence with the profoundest apologies. If not—well, that understands itself. Your servant, sir." And his excellency bowed himself out.

Safford's prospects were hardly cheerful. A week hence the date of the assassination would be passed. If the king did not go to mass, or observed any unusual precautions, or if any arrests were made, Safford's doom was sealed. In view of the document in the consul's hands, some of these things were sure to happen. He tried to be a philosopher and reflect that he was no worse off than if he had died in the catacombs, but there was no great comfort in the thought.

The next morning his breakfast was brought by a young girl—a girl with fine black eyes and cheeks in which the red blood showed through the olive skin. Safford noticed all this as she stood in the doorway and thought, too, he detected some compassion lurking in the depths of those eyes. He found himself hoping that she would come again. She did come, and after looking over her shoulder to see if she were observed, came down two or three steps and closed the door behind her.

"Do you not speak Italian a little, signor?"

Ah, it was a trap! Safford was on his guard in an instant.

"You need not fear me. I am your friend. Ah, if you could speak it only so little! I would help you gladly. But I cannot speak your English."

Safford was sadly perplexed. Here perhaps was a chance of escape. But it might also be a ruse to make him commit himself. He hesitated.

"Ah, I am so sorry," the girl went on in her mellifluous Italian, "so sorry. You do not understand me, and I so wanted to help you."

A wave of trust came over him. He opened his lips to speak but she had gone.

Safford waited in vain for her return. His meals were, as before, brought by a rough looking man, who made no attempt to speak with him. A couple of days passed, counted only by meals. Then the door opened and as it let in no light, Safford concluded it must be night. The door was closed very gently indeed, a match was struck, and Safford saw the dark eyed girl again. She lit a lantern which she carried and set it on one of the lower steps, then she drew forth a book and held it towards Safford. It was an Italian-English dictionary. Slowly and painfully the girl hunted out word after word that she needed, showing each English word to Safford as she found it. He

let her go on, wishing to get as much information as possible before trusting her entirely. This was her communication :

"Bad men wish kill you. My uncle not wish. They have much discontent. He go way tomorrow. They plan kill you then."

This was only too likely. He had felt all along that only the unaccountable compassion or compunction of his excellency—who was apparently the girl's uncle—stood between him and the vengeance of the fierce and brutal natures associated with him. Safford cast aside all reserve and addressed his benefactress in Italian. At first she seemed offended at his previous lack of confidence, but he soon explained that and everything else to her satisfaction.

"So you have warned them, and the king is safe? Praised be the saints! I, too, so longed to do that, but I did not dare. Besides, I did not know exactly. They had not told me the time or place. Ah, how I hate their plotting! Since my aunt died, my uncle has done nothing but plot. I think he is crazy. It is only charity to think so. But these low, ignorant men who are with him, they are brutes, that is all. He has forced me to join the society and take the oaths. I have not dared to break them till now, for I knew they would kill me. But listen, we are wasting time. I might tell my uncle and save your life tomorrow, but since you have really done what they accuse you of, they will find it out in a few days, and my uncle himself will condemn you to death. You must escape. I will help you. It shall be right away. Are you willing to trust me and to try it?"

For answer Safford bowed low and lifted the girl's shapely hand to his lips. The little hand trembled very much, and its owner drew it hastily away.

She extinguished the light and opened the door. They picked their way noiselessly through the house, a medieval structure, half castle, half chateau. Several men lay in the hallway sleeping heavily. Outside the door a great dog sprang out at them, but was checked immediately by the sound of the girl's voice. Safford glanced back at the towers and battlements of the structure he had just left.

"Who is your uncle?" he said curiously.

"The Marchese Palavini."

Safford started. It was a name well known and respected, and belonged to one of the last men in Rome to be suspected of plotting against the king's life.

"And you?"

"I am Annunciata Palavini."

"You are well named," he murmured gratefully, "for you have announced glad tidings of life and hope to me this night."

"Not so fast," she answered nervously; "we are not safe yet."

They had a long walk before them to Rome, twelve miles, Annunciata said, and they must make haste to get there in time for the Florentine train.

"Why should I leave in the train?" Safford asked her. "Why not go to police headquarters and claim protection?"

"Can you ask?" said the girl. "If we did that, we should have to tell

the whole story and denounce my uncle. You have already made sure his plot will come to naught. Would you willingly procure his death who has twice saved your life? If I had known you were so bloodthirsty, I should never have helped you to escape."

"Nay, signorina, I do not desire your uncle's death. You are entirely right, and I will go, wherever you bid me."

The sun was well up before they reached Rome. Safford could see that his companion was very much fatigued, for Italian girls are no walkers, but she was too plucky to own it.

Several times she hurried him into a shop or around a corner to get away from some member of the secret society who might recognize him.

They spent most of their spare time in churches, as being safer than the street, giving them a chance to kneel in a corner and cover their faces with their hands.

"Better not stop at Florence," Annunciata remarked. "There is no safety in Italy."

"I expect that's so," Safford answered. "I'll go straight through to Nice."

When at last they reached the station, Annunciata handed him her purse.

"I don't want this," Safford said, trying to return it. "I have money."

"But I would rather you didn't pay for *my* ticket," the girl said shyly.

"You don't mean to say you are coming with me?"

The tears sprang to her eyes and her lips quivered.

"I thought that went without saying," she murmured. "It is death to me to remain. Nevertheless, if you wish to——"

"Heaven forbid!" Safford cried. Then he grew very red and stammered sadly. "But don't you see, my dear girl, you can't go along with me unless you are willing to marry me?"

"I suppose that is true," she answered demurely.

And that is how Walter Safford came to bring home an Italian wife.

Edith Elmer Wood.

THE RED ROSE.

THE rose, like a meek, white nun,

Kneeled 'neath the vaulted sky,

And swung her fragrant censer

Over the daisies nigh.

Stealing upon her devotions

The sun like a Cupid came,

And kissed the wan, white sister

Until she blushed for shame.

B. M. Wilson.

THE MUTINY ON THE FLYING CLOUD.*

Thrilling experiences among the islands of the Western Pacific—The hostage chosen by the pirates to coerce the first mate—What befell when the Malays attacked the stockade on Refuge Island.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

THE clipper ship *Flying Cloud*, Captain Blake commanding, is en route between New York and Australia, with seven passengers: Dr. Henderson, his wife, his child Lucy and his wife's sister, Sibyl Stanley; also Mr. Grant, a civil engineer, with his wife and seven year old son Percy. After crossing the line the chief mate, Bryce, is lost overboard and Ned Wilson, scarcely twenty, is advanced to the post, while Robert Manners, who is no older, is made second officer. Meantime Josh Williams, one of the able seamen, fomented discontent among the crew and one night Captain Blake and Manners are seized, bound and placed in captivity, while Williams informs Ned Wilson that the price of the safety of the women and children among the passengers is his promise to faithfully navigate the ship to the best of his ability for the mutineers.

Williams proposes to put the passengers ashore on one island and the two ship's officers on another, but several days elapse before land that seems suitable is sighted. Finally one about six miles long is selected and the passengers are sent off in two boats. At the last moment Sibyl Stanley is detained from accompanying her friends, Williams arguing that she must be held to insure Ned's trustworthiness. Captain Blake and Manners are landed on another island, and soon afterwards the *Flying Cloud* is put in at a third one, having a safe harbor between tall cliffs, screening her from all observation. Ned, while off on an exploring trip with Sibyl, finds a cave containing thousands of dollars' worth of gold, a discovery which they determine to keep from the knowledge of the mutineers. Meantime, after Mr. Grant has chanced upon the wreck of a vessel, the *Mermaid*, the party on Refuge Island build a raft, on which to transport the wreck, piecemeal, to the shore, to be utilized in various ways. On one of these journeys they fall in with a canoe containing Captain Blake and Rob Manners, and there is great rejoicing over the reunion. Captain Blake warns them that there are savages in the neighborhood, and they proceed to build a house or fort, out of a quarry they are fortunate enough to find on the island. They plan also to build a cutter, in which to escape, and after the laying of the keel Captain Blake goes fishing on the raft, is overtaken by a hurricane, and is given up for lost by his friends. They proceed with the building of their boat, which is almost completed when Grant and Percy are captured by a party of Malays who suddenly make their appearance on the island. After those in the fort have fired upon them, they send a pictured message declaring that they would give up their prisoners only on condition that the others march out of the stockade and throw down their arms. Otherwise Grant and his little son will be burned alive.

The alternative is a dreadful one and the three men, who have two women and a child to protect, know not what to do, until suddenly Dr. Henderson conceives a desperate plan.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE FORLORN HOPE.

DR. HENDERSON had decided upon a plan of attack. Looking at his watch, he found it was two o'clock—just four hours to sunrise. There was not much time to spare, for when the sun next rose Grant and his child must be once more safe within the walls of the fort, or—well, that must not be thought of.

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So, taking one more keen glance around, to make quite sure that all was safe, Henderson went softly down the staircase leading to the courtyard, and quietly directed Manners and Nicholls to rejoin him at once upon the parapet. This done, he entered his own room.

A lamp, turned low, was burning upon the table, and by its light he was just able to see that little Lucille was sleeping calmly where he had laid her; but his wife was absent, and he needed not to be told where she was.

He stood for a moment looking with unspeakable fondness upon the sleeping child, and then, bending over her, he pressed one kiss upon her forehead. As he did so she smiled in her sleep, her rosebud lips quivered a moment, and then he heard her whisper, "Dear Percy!"

It was enough; had he felt the least lingering hesitation about the carrying out of his plan, that unconscious appeal made by his sleeping child would have effectually banished it, and, dashing away the tears that rose to his eyes, the doctor quietly withdrew.

There was a light burning in Mrs. Grant's room; and, as he passed the door on tiptoe and stealthily, as though he had been engaged upon some unlawful errand, he caught the low murmur of his wife's voice, and a stifled sob. That was another appeal not to be resisted; and without venturing to disturb the two mourning watchers—though he never before yearned so hungrily for a parting word with his wife, or a sight of her face—he passed noiselessly on, and so regained the parapet, where Manners and Nicholls already awaited him.

To them he fully unfolded his plan, minutely explaining not only his own but also their part in it; after which he gave them his final instructions, and then taking both of Grant's magazine rifles in his hand, and thrusting a brace of revolvers into his belt—having previously loaded each weapon carefully with his own hands—he quietly lowered the outer ladder, cautioning his companions to draw it up again after him, and stepped briskly but noiselessly out through the dew laden grass in the direction of the shipyard.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—DOOMED TO DIE.

THE story told by little Lucille relative to the first appearance of the Malays was so graphic and accurate up to the point of Grant's capture, that little or no addition is needed to complete it.

The shell gatherers had been most successful in their quest, and returning to Grant Island laden with their delicate and beautiful spoils, were about half way across the stream—which, it will be remembered, was of considerable width at the point where they would have to cross—when the Malay proa suddenly hove in sight round a bend of the channel.

There was only one possible explanation of the reason why Grant had not seen her in ample time to avoid capture, and that was that whilst he had been busy with the children on the eastern beach, the proa must have been approaching from the westward, which would cause her to be hidden from view by the intervening high land.

By what means, however, her crew had discovered the entrance to the harbor must remain a mystery ; probably it was the result of pure accident, for, as has already been mentioned, it was so artfully concealed that even Grant himself, when voyaging to and fro in the raft during the earlier part of his sojourn upon the island, had upon more than one occasion been puzzled to find it.

Be this as it may, the moment of the proa's arrival in the river was a most unfortunate one for the occupants of the punt, who were seen and chased by the Malays the instant that their vessel rounded the point.

Grant at once saw that escape for himself as well as for the children was impossible ; he was as near Grant Island as he was to the main, and in whichever direction he headed he must inevitably be overtaken before he could make good his retreat, and with his usual promptitude he at once decided to continue his course for the islet, hoping to be able to make a sufficiently long stand against the enemy to permit of the children gaining the safe refuge of the fort.

He was hailed as soon as seen ; but, of course, the only notice he took of this was to urge the clumsy, heavy punt with redoubled speed through the water. Finding him so contumacious, the Malays then fired upon him several times, and succeeded in slightly wounding him in the head.

As the proa advanced further up the stream, and drew closer and closer still, in under the lee of the high land, the wind grew light and shy with her, and then, perhaps fearing that after all their prey might escape them, the crew hastily launched a boat and gave chase in her.

But for that unlucky wound in the head, it is possible that Grant might have succeeded in his plucky effort ; but though the bullet inflicted but little actual damage, the blow stunned and dazed him so that for a minute or two he scarcely knew where he was or what he was doing. Trifling as was the amount of time thus lost, it was sufficient to ruin what little chance he originally had ; for when the punt at length grounded with a shock on the sandy beach of the creek, the Malays were scarcely a dozen yards astern of her, and Grant had only just time to lift the youngsters out on the sand, to give the hasty injunction, "Run away home, children, as fast as ever you can," and to seize an oar in self defense, when the enemy—nine of them—were upon him.

Of course, armed as he was with no better weapon than a clumsy oar, he had no chance whatever against such overwhelming odds, and, though he managed to fell three of his antagonists, the fight had not lasted two minutes before his arms were pinioned from behind, his feet tripped from under him, and himself made a prisoner. He was quickly rolled over on his face, and his arms securely lashed behind him, when, this being satisfactorily accomplished, his captors raised him to his feet, and, conducting him to a tree, firmly bound him to its trunk.

The idea then seemed to occur to the Malays that possibly the children might not yet be beyond the reach of capture, for two of them set off at a run in pursuit along the path leading to the fort.

Grant guessed only too surely at the object of this sudden and hurried

departure, and his heart sank with dismal apprehension as he thought of the distance those little feet would have to traverse ere the refuge of the fort would be won, of their liability to become fagged and to lag upon the way, and of the fleetness of foot displayed by their cruel pursuers when starting upon their relentless errand. And when, from the prolonged absence of the pursuers, apprehension was beginning to yield to a hope that the children were safe, he was plunged into the bitterest distress by the reappearance of one of the miscreants, roughly and cruelly dragging along by the arm his only son, Percy, the poor child crying bitterly with terror and the ruffianly usage to which he was being subjected.

On seeing his father, the little fellow managed, by a sudden and unexpected effort, to break away from his captor, and, running up to Grant, embraced him, crying :

"Come tw, father, make that cruel man leave me alone ; he has been whipping me. As twisting my arm and hurting it so much that I can scarcely use it. mb., don't let him touch me again, father," as he saw the Malay approaching with a scowl of hideous malignity upon his ugly features.

"Oh My darling boy, I cannot help you," groaned Grant. "Would to God that I could ! but you see they have bound me to this tree so that I cannot move. Listen, Percy dear ; we can do nothing at present but submit to these men, who have us in their power, so you must just let them do what they will with you, my precious one ; go with the man very quietly, and then perhaps he will not ill treat you any more."

"Must I, father ?" asked the little fellow tearfully, and looking at his father in vague surprise at so seemingly heartless a command.

"Yes, dear boy, yes. It is for your own good that I tell you to do this," answered Grant brokenly, for he keenly felt the unspoken reproach which he saw in the child's eyes as the little fellow forlornly turned away and with a piteous sob quietly surrendered himself to the brute, who now again with ruffianly violence seized upon his helpless victim.

"Oh, don't ! you hurt me so !" the poor little fellow suddenly screamed out ; and the father's heart swelled almost to bursting with impotent fury as he saw the cruel clutch with which the wretch was digging his long, thin, sinewy fingers into the tender flesh of the boy's shoulder as he forced him to an adjoining tree, to which he forthwith proceeded to lash him, drawing the cord so tightly round the slender wrists that the little fellow fairly screamed with the intolerable pain.

"Curse you !" yelled Grant, now fairly stung to madness and foaming at the mouth with fury ; "curse you, fiend that you are !" And as he hurled forth words of rage and defiance he tugged and strained with such superhuman strength upon his bonds that the stout rope fairly cracked whilst it cut into the flesh of his wrists down to the bone.

But the lashing was too strong to yield to even his frenzied efforts, apart from the fact that, with his hands lashed behind him, he had no opportunity to exert his strength effectively, and at length, completely exhausted, he was fain to desist, to the undisguised delight of a little knot of the Malays who had gathered round and were keenly enjoying the scene.

So much pleasure, indeed, did they derive from it that they said something to little Percy's tormentor which was evidently an incitement for him to continue his ill treatment of the child, for the fellow, with an acquiescent grin, had no sooner finished his task of lashing the little fellow to the tree—a task which he performed with the utmost deliberation and gusto—than he retired a pace or two, contemplating the helplessness of his little victim with malignant satisfaction, and then, with a glance toward Grant and a few laughing words to his companions, he stepped forward and dealt the poor child a savage blow upon the mouth with his clinched fist—so cruel a blow that it extorted another piercing scream of pain and terror from the sufferer, and caused his quivering lips to stream with blood.

Grant said nothing this time, nor did he renew his worse than useless efforts to burst his bonds, but he directed toward the fellow a look of such deadly ferocity that the wretch actually quailed under it, and seems reft enough to slink away into the background under cover of an order. ^{1 t} Another Malay, apparently one of the officers of the proa, now stepped forward and gave him.

Possibly the order given may have been to desist from further ill treatment of the child, for the newcomer next said something to the group of onlookers, which caused them also to retire, with many a backward glance of animosity at Grant, which he returned with interest. These dismissed, the officer, if such he was, looked at the sobbing child's bonds, and, with a muttered word or two, he proceeded to loosen them sufficiently to relieve the little fellow from the cruel suffering they had caused him—a proceeding which won for him a look of unspeakable gratitude from Grant which seemed to be not wholly unappreciated.

The loosening of his bonds afforded the poor child so much relief that he now felt almost comfortable, comparatively speaking; and, exhausted with the pain and terror he had already endured, he soon sank into a kind of stupor, which, if it did not amount to actual insensibility, approached it so nearly as to afford the poor little fellow at least a temporary forgetfulness of his situation and surroundings.

Grant, speaking quietly once or twice to him without obtaining a reply, at once saw with intense satisfaction the state his child had fallen into; and to such a state of despair had he now been brought that he would have been positively happy could he have been assured that his darling boy was dead and beyond the reach of further suffering.

For as he now had leisure to reflect, the future, so far as they two were concerned, was without a single ray of hope to brighten it. He knew, of course, that those stanch comrades of his at the fort would not abandon him and his child to the mercy of the Malays without making some attempt at a rescue; but there were only three of them, and what could three men, however brave, do against such overwhelming odds unless acting upon the defensive and behind stone walls?

There, indeed, but not in the open field, he had some hopes for them, and there he fully expected they would all very shortly have their hands full, for he momentarily expected to see the whole body of the Malays—except, of

course, a man or two to guard himself and his boy—move off to the attack of the fort. And if the attack failed, as he hoped and believed it would, the Malay loss would doubtless be very heavy ; and he had heard quite enough of their vindictive nature to feel assured they would take their revenge upon him and Percy. Yes, the more he thought about it, the more convinced did he become that it was their doom to die.

"Well," he murmured, "God's will be done." It was best, perhaps, that his child should die now, young and innocent as he was ; and as for himself, if he could but be satisfied that the little fellow's death was quick and easy, he cared not how soon he followed him.

As he cogitated painfully over this problem he saw a party of twelve Malays detach themselves from the rest and move off in the direction of the fort. Then after a considerable interval came the sounds of firing, followed some twenty minutes later by the return of four only out of the twelve.

A sickening fear came over Grant at first that those in the fort had succumbed to the attack, and that the eight absentees were remaining behind in charge of the prisoners. But a little reflection led him to believe that, had such been the case, the prisoners would have been brought in triumph to the Malay camp.

Could it be possible then, he asked himself, that the missing eight had fallen in the attack ? It might be so. The bearing of the four who had returned was anything but triumphant ; and there was a great deal of excited talk and gesticulation on their part, seemingly in the nature of an explanation, and more excited talk among the others, followed, after a long and stormy debate, by the preparation and despatch of the letter, the delivery of which we witnessed in the preceding chapter.

This last act of the Malays completely reassured Grant as to the safety of the fort and its inmates, but it also confirmed him in his belief that his own fate and that of his child was sealed.

CHAPTER XXXV.—FIGHTING FOR LIFE.

THE messengers soon returned, a few questions were put to them and answered ; a couple of sentries were posted with loaded muskets at the entrance of the bushy path leading to the fort ; a man was detailed to keep watch upon the two prisoners ; the watch fire was bountifully replenished ; and then the camp sank into a state of repose.

The long, weary, trying night gradually wore to its close. The moon hung low in the western sky ; the horizon to the eastward paled from violet black to pearly gray ; and the stars in that quarter were beginning to lose their luster.

The air, which during the earlier hours of the night had been oppressively sultry, now came cool and refreshing to the fevered brows of the anxious watchers ; the insects had subdued their irritating din, as is their wont toward the dawn ; the watch fire had smoldered down to a heap of gray, feathery, faintly glowing ashes ; the two sentinels at the entrance of the bushy path had ceased the alert pacing to and fro, and, having grounded

their muskets, were now drooping wearily upon them with their hands crossed over the top of the barrels; while the Malay who had been detailed to watch the prisoners, having some half a dozen times during the earlier hours of the night tested their bonds and satisfied himself of their perfect security, was now seated on the ground beside his charges, with his fingers interlocked across his knees and his head bowed forward, manifestly napping.

The weariness of the long night had told upon both the prisoners; their conversation had first languished and then ceased altogether; but now the cool, fresh, sweet smelling breeze had aroused them both. Grant first, and the poor, tired out, suffering child soon afterward; and while the first was looking abroad over the tree tops at the brightening sky to the eastward and thinking that now, surely, their fate must be drawing very nigh, the little fellow by his side stirred uneasily, roused himself, and put the question:

"Father, do you think that Dr. Henderson and Mr. Manners will come and set us free?"

Grant, with their probable fate now apparently so near at hand, was debating within himself what answer to return, when his attention was arrested by a curious vibrating movement of his bonds, as though they were being tampered with from behind the tree to which he was bound. Before he could collect his faculties sufficiently to even ask himself what it meant, a low whisper from behind him caught his ear: "Hush! it is I—Henderson!"

And at the same instant the ropes which bound him suddenly slackened about his limbs and disappeared behind him. Then an arm appeared round the bole of the tree, and Grant felt the cold barrel of a rifle being thrust into his hand, while the voice again whispered,

"Your own repeater fully loaded. Now to loose poor little Percy."

Then Grant turned to his child—how white and haggard the dear little fellow looked in the pallid light of the dawn—and, with a heart brimful of gratitude for the priceless gift of restored freedom, said in reply to his question:

"They are coming soon, darling—now, *at once*, in fact. But, Percy, dear boy, take care that you do not move or cry out when you feel the rope loosening; stand perfectly still and quiet, my son, until I tell you what to do."

The little fellow looked eagerly up into his father's face, and whispered, "Yes, father." And then Grant saw his look of surprise as he felt Henderson's hand releasing him.

The bonds fell away; the child was free; and presently Grant saw a shadowy figure bend forward and whisper in the little fellow's ear. There was a start, a faint cry of rapture, the little arms were flung lovingly round the neck of the bending figure, and Grant caught the murmured words:

"Thank you, dear doctor, oh, *thank you!*"

But that childish, involuntary cry of delight, faint as it was, had caught the quick ear of the dozing guard. The fellow raised his head, and, seeing that something was wrong—though he was still too drowsy to distinguish what it was—scrambled to his feet and advanced toward Grant.

Up to that moment the engineer had not moved ; he was waiting for the blood to circulate once more in his cramped limbs, and also for Henderson to give him the cue for their next action.

He remained perfectly still until the Malay had approached within arm's length of him, and then, with a single, lightning-like blow of his fist, he dropped the fellow senseless upon the grass at his feet. Then, swift as light, he glided behind the tree, where Henderson stood with Percy in his arms, and, convulsively gripping the other's outstretched hand, he murmured :

"A thousand thanks, old fellow ! Now, which way are we to go?"

"I arranged for Manners and Nicholls to join us in the path yonder, never dreaming that those two men would be posted there," whispered Henderson in return.

"Well, come along then," cheerfully observed Grant. "We shall have to shoot if they offer to oppose our passage. Ha ! we shall be *compelled* to fight whether we will or not ; that fellow whom I knocked down is reviving, and he will raise the alarm before we have gone a dozen feet. Give me the child ; my arms are still benumbed and scarcely fit to hold a rifle, but I can carry him. So, that is it"—as Henderson handed over little Percy—"now let us make a run for it."

Therewith the two friends started at top speed for the entrance of the path, running straight toward the two Malay sentinels.

No sooner, however, did they appear in the open than a cry was raised, and in an instant the whole camp was on the alert, some of the Malays running to intercept the fugitives, whilst others hurriedly sprang for their muskets and opened a wild fusillade upon them.

The two sentinels faced about, and seeing the white men running, at once raised their weapons to their shoulders.

"Halt !" cried Grant, setting Percy down on the ground and facing about toward their pursuers. "Attend to those two sentries, Henderson ! I will deal with the others !"

No sooner said than done. Henderson pulled up at once, and, coolly receiving the fire of the two Malays—which, however, owing to their being hurried, proved harmless—deliberately dropped them, one after the other.

"Now, on again !" exclaimed the engineer, snatching up his frightened child and regaining Henderson's side. As they ran, Henderson placed a whistle between his lips and blew a single, short, piercing call upon it. "That will soon bring the other two to our help," he gasped.

They were by this time within a hundred feet of the border of the woods ; but the light heeled Malays were close behind them. The time for decisive action had arrived.

Seeing this, Grant once more placed his child on the ground, and said :

"Now run home as fast as you can, dear boy, and tell mother that the doctor and I hope to be with her in a quarter of an hour."

Then, as the little fellow made off at top speed, the father added, "Thank God, *his* retreat is secured if we can hold out for ten minutes. Now, Henderson, true and trusty comrade, let us make a stand here, and, shoulder to shoulder, show these rascals how we can fight."

So, without another word, the two friends turned and stood at bay, finding time to bring down two of their foes before they were closed with.

And then began a battle, fierce and grim—sixteen Malays to two Americans.

Luckily for the smaller party, the Malays had, at the beginning of the disturbance, emptied their pieces ineffectually, and had found no time to reload them, while Henderson had provided himself, in addition to the two repeating rifles, with a brace of loaded chambered revolvers, one of which he now handed to Grant. With these and their clubbed rifles the two men fought so desperately, that not only were the Malays effectually checked in their attempt at an outflanking movement, but actually foiled in their intention to bear down the two men by sheer force of numbers and brute strength.

Swinging their rifles club-wise with one hand, and firing their revolvers with the other whenever they saw a chance of making a shot tell, the two wrought such terrible execution that at length the Malays drew back confounded.

At this moment a cheer was heard close at hand, and in another instant up dashed Manners and Nicholls, breathless with hard running, and placed themselves on each side of their countrymen.

"Now let us give them a volley!" cried Grant—who, his blood fairly boiling at the recollection of the past night, had been fighting like a demon—and, at the word, up went the four rifles to the "present."

"Choose each his man!" ordered the inexorable engineer; and then outrang the four pieces, leaving three foes the less to deal with.

Hark! what was that? Not an echo of the rifle shots, surely; no, it was the boom of a distant gun, unless the ears of all strangely deceived them.

Whatever it was, the Malays also heard the sound, and, looking for an instant in consternation at one another, wavered, turned, and fled.

"Hurrah!" cried Grant exultantly, "rescue is at hand. After the rascals, and give them a lesson they will never forget!"

It was perhaps an imprudent thing to do, but away after the flying foe went the four men, popping away with their revolvers, and so severely galling the Malays that *saue qui peut* quickly became the word with the latter, who now evidently thought of nothing but how to reach their boats alive.

One in his frantic haste stumbled and fell, revealing his features to Grant as he did so. It was the wretch who had so cruelly ill treated little Percy.

With a couple of bounds the engineer was upon him. Wrestling the creese from the fellow's hand, Grant seized him by the collar and dragged him along the ground, writhing, to a clump of canes growing close at hand. With his foot on the man's neck to keep him down, the engineer then cut with the creese a stout, pliant cane, lifted the wretch to his feet by main strength, and, dropping his weapons to the ground, and still retaining his grip upon the fellow's collar, deliberately thrashed him until the cane was split into ribbons and the clothes literally cut from his back, finally dismissing him with a kick which—apart from the thrashing—it is safe to say that Malay will never forget so long as life shall last.

The unfortunate wretch hobbled off with remarkable celerity—considering that every bone in his body must have been aching—eager to overtake his comrades, whose “speed” had been materially increased, not only by the heat with which they were pursued, but also by the booming of the guns in the offing.

Grant followed more leisurely, for, in common with his three friends, he had suffered somewhat in the *mêlée*—though, fortunately, none of them was seriously hurt—and he reached the cove just in time to witness the hasty departure of the proa.

He seized this, the first opportunity which had presented itself, to heartily thank his companions for their gallant rescue of himself and his child, inquired anxiously after the safety of the little Lucille, and then said :

“I have been wondering what can be the meaning of that firing in the offing. I cannot help thinking it is intended as a signal of some kind to us, and, assuming that to be the case, I can only account for it upon the pleasant supposition that Captain Blake, instead of perishing in the hurricane as we feared, must have in some miraculous manner escaped ; and that it is he who is now outside, on board of a rescue ship, come to take us all off the island. I think it would be well if you, Manners, were to take the punt, and, with Nicholls, go out as far as the harbor’s mouth to reconnoiter, taking care not to show yourselves until you are quite certain that the craft is a friendly one.”

The two men named eagerly adopted the suggestion, and a minute later were afloat and pulling rapidly down stream.

As soon as they were fairly off, Grant turned to Henderson and said,

“And now, my dear fellow, I think I will walk as far as the fort to exchange a word or two with Ida, and assure them all of our safety, and then I will rejoin you here to await the tidings from outside.”

Meanwhile Manners and Nicholls, pushing off into the strength of the current, sped rapidly toward the two headlands which guarded the harbor’s mouth ; arriving at which they landed, hauled the punt up on the beach, and made their way through the bushes to a point from which, themselves unseen, they could get a clear view of the open sea.

And then what an exhilarating sight met their delighted eyes !

A large, full rigged ship lay in the offing, about a mile distant, hove to under her three topsails, spanker, and jib.

Manners happened to have in his pocket a small telescope which he always carried about with him, and this he quickly brought to bear upon the stranger. Watching him eagerly, Nicholls observed him change color ; a perplexed expression passed over his face, his hand trembled. For two long minutes he remained steadfastly peering through the telescope ; then he suddenly closed it with an excited exclamation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—AT ISLAND HARBOR.

TURNING for a while from the marooned passengers of the Flying Cloud, and their exciting experiences on Refuge Island, we must take up the story

of the mutineers and their two prisoners in the retreat which Captain Josh Williams had christened Island Harbor.

In accordance with Williams' plans the Cloud's cargo was in due time discharged and warehoused on shore in the newly built stores; the ship herself stripped, hove down, scrubbed, and repainted from her keel up; her interior rearranged—particularly the forecabin, which was extended sufficiently to accommodate a hundred men; the upper spars replaced by new ones, somewhat higher in the hoist, cut on the island; her canvas altered to fit the new spars; the bulwarks strengthened and pierced; the breech loading guns, twelve in number, mounted on carriages and placed in position. In short, the ship was made to look as like a man of war as possible, though she as much resembled the old fashioned sailing sloop which then still performed duty on our more distant stations, as a swan does a goose, her sailing powers far exceeding those of the fastest of them, while Williams' alterations only had the effect of imparting to her an extremely rakish and wicked appearance.

In due time—not a very long time either, taking into consideration the amount of work done—the ship was once more ready for sea, and, ballasted carefully down to her very best sailing trim, she left Island Harbor for an extensive piratical cruise.

It is not necessary to describe in detail where she went, or the various adventures met with by her crew; suffice it to say that the cruise proved wonderfully successful, several very valuable prizes being taken—no less than three being vessels with large amounts of specie on board.

When Williams first mooted to the crew his proposal to seize the ship and convert her into a pirate, he had met the strongest objection made by the more scrupulous of the men by asserting that he had a plan whereby all bloodshed could be avoided; this plan being no less than to practically enslave such portions of the crews of the prospective prizes as refused to become pirates, and to confine them at Island Harbor, there to perform the large amount of work necessary to the complete furtherance of Williams' ambitious schemes.

But, as may be supposed, the plan when put to a practical test failed. Capture was not in all cases tamely submitted to—resistance was offered, and blood was shed in the conflict. And when this had once happened all scruples vanished. The worst passions of the men asserted themselves, and, breaking loose from all restraint, speedily converted their possessors into very demons.

Sibyl Stanley was daily and hourly in peril during the latter part of that dreadful cruise. Still, thanks to the compact with Ned Wilson and the hold which he still had upon the crew, the unhappy girl had so far escaped direct threats and open insult.

But toward the end of the cruise matters had reached such a stage that she saw the absolute necessity of effecting her escape immediately upon the arrival of the ship again at Island Harbor. The state of horror and terror into which she was continually thrown was such that death itself seemed preferable to a further continuance of such a life as she was then living.

At length the ship once more glided into the secure haven of Island Harbor, and about five o'clock in the evening let go her anchor. The sails were furled auyhow—discipline having by this time grown very lax on board the Flying Cloud notwithstanding all William's efforts to maintain it—and then the men, without going through the formality of asking leave, lowered the boats and went ashore in a body; Sibyl, Ned, and Williams were left to follow, if they chose, in the dingey, which they did, the steward being ordered to remain on board for the night as anchor watch.

When the dingey reached the shore its occupants discovered that the ship's crew—among whom were several new hands who had joined from the prizes—had already seized a cask of spirits, and were evidently bent upon a carouse in celebration of the successful completion of their first cruise.

They were then only rough and noisy, the liquor not having had time to operate; but an hour later the entire band, with a very few exceptions, had become converted into a howling mob of drunken desperadoes, ripe and eager for any species of ruffianism which might suggest itself.

Sibyl was at this time busy putting matters to rights in the hut which Ned had caused to be erected on their previous visit to the island, and Ned was busy in the same way in his tent when Williams, happening to pass by, looked in at the latter.

"Hark ye, youngster," he gruffly remarked, "you and the young woman had better keep well out of sight tonight, for if either of you are seen, mischief may come of it; and whilst those beasts up there are in their present condition, neither I nor anybody else could help you. The rascals are mad drunk, and hungry for mischief. They positively *laughed* at me just now when I tried to bring them to something like order. But if I don't make them smart for it tomorrow when we start to overhaul the rigging, call me a Dutchman."

Coupled with what he had already seen and heard, this warning of Williams' so seriously impressed Ned that he went to Sibyl's door and called to her to put on her hat and join him outside. As soon as she appeared Ned said:

"Look here, Miss Stanley, Williams has just been here to tell me that the men up there are mad with drink and—as he phrased it—hungry for mischief. Judging from the frightful noise and commotion among them I should say he is right, and I have called you out to tell you that I think it will be best for you and me to return on board the ship; the steward is there, you know, and he and I can keep the anchor watch between us whilst you take your rest as usual in your cabin."

Sibyl had long ago come to the conclusion that she could do no better than follow poor Captain Blake's advice, and unreservedly follow Ned's instructions, so she at once announced her readiness to do whatever he thought best. Upon this, Ned, believing that no time was to be lost, at once extinguished the lights, and, locking the door, placed the key in his pocket; after which, taking a somewhat circuitous route in order to avoid attracting attention, he and Sibyl made their way down to the spot where they had left the dingey.

The boat was still there, with her oars and rowlocks in her just as she had been left. Handing his companion in and instructing her to sit steady, Ned placed his shoulder against the stem of the boat, and with a powerful shove sent her stern foremost off the beach, springing over the bows as he did so.

There was a bright moon, nearly full, riding high in the sky, and Ned was rather apprehensive that this movement might attract attention and provoke pursuit. But the men had, for some reason or other, kindled a large fire, round which they were holding their carouse, and the young sailor could only hope that the brilliant blaze would dazzle their eyes, and blind them to everything beyond the circle of its influence. Perhaps it did so, for there was no sign of pursuit.

Ned had never allowed the idea of escape to be absent from his thoughts for a single day since the memorable one upon which the ship had first been seized; but, fertile as he usually was in resource, he had never been able to think of anything practicable except that of seeking a refuge in the treasure cave; and this scheme was open to so many serious objections that he and Sibyl had agreed together that it must not be adopted except as a very last resource.

Now, however, as the dingey approached the ship and Ned gazed admiringly aloft at the tall graceful spars and complicated network of rigging, and reflected that at that moment the beautiful fabric was in charge of only one man—and that man friendly to him, as he had long ago ascertained—a daring idea suddenly took possession of him and, without giving himself time to reflect, he there and then resolved upon its execution.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—A DARING PLAN.

THE wind was blowing moderately fresh from the northwest; but so secure was the anchorage and so good the holding ground that, on arriving on board, Ned was not at all surprised to find that the steward, instead of keeping watch, had gone below and turned in, trusting to luck that, once on shore, nobody would dream of going off again to the ship that night.

This arrangement, however, though it might be perfectly satisfactory to the steward, by no means suited Ned, who at once went below and unceremoniously routed the poor man out of his berth.

"Price," said he, "I have something of the utmost importance to say to you. I have noticed that in the course of conversation, when nobody else has been present, you have frequently gone out of your way to remind me that I am an unwilling member of the piratical crew in the midst of which we find ourselves; and you have also dropped sundry hints that if ever I hit upon a way of escape you will be more than pleased to accompany me. Now, I want to know exactly what you have meant by this."

"Just exactly what I have said, Mr. Wilson, or rather what you have said," answered Price. "I joined the party because I had no fancy for being left to die on a desert island, like those unfortunate passengers or the poor skipper and Mr. Manners; but I didn't know then what was before me, sir. I am a peaceable man, I am, and, though I've had no hand in any of the bloodshed that has occurred since we sailed from here, I know that murder

has been committed, and I want to separate myself from the murderers. If I could I would have prevented the mutiny in the first place ; but I never knew that anything serious was intended——”

“Well, never mind about that just now,” interrupted Ned ; “the present question is this. If I happened to have formed a plan of escape—a plan, we will say, involving a considerable amount of risk and a great deal of hard work, would you be willing to join me in it?”

“Would I? Only try me, Mr. Wilson—try me, sir! Why, there is no risk, no labor, I would not willingly face for a good chance to escape from that pack of yelling savages over yonder. Why, what are they doing now, sir? Bless if it doesn’t look as though they had been and set fire to the hut, sir!”

Ned ran into the saloon and brought the glass on deck.

“They have!” he exclaimed, looking through the instrument at a bright blaze which was leaping up among the trees on shore. “Well, never mind,” he continued ; “it does not matter, for I intend attempting an escape from them tonight—now, at once—and glad enough shall I be to have your assistance. I intend nothing less than to run off with the ship; so——”

“To run off with the ship?” echoed Price. “Oh, Mr. Wilson, we can never do that, sir——”

“I shall try, at all events,” interrupted Ned. “So while I slip out and cast loose the jib, do you go below to the boatswain’s locker and bring me a cold chisel and a good heavy hammer, and we’ll cut the cable.”

Without further parley, Price did as he was bidden, and very soon he and Ned were busy knocking out the pin from the shackle in the cable which happened to be nearest the hawse pipe. The job occupied them fully a quarter of an hour, for the pipe was rusted in ; but at length out it came, and in another minute away went the end of the cable out through the hawse pipe and into the water with a loud rattle and a splash.

“So far, so good,” said Ned. “Now, Price, I want you to take the glass and keep a sharp watch upon the shore. The ship is now adrift, and driving slowly stern foremost toward the outer basin. So long as we see no sign of alarm from the people on shore, I shall let her drift ; that will increase our chances of a good start. But the moment you see any indication of an attempt to launch a boat, give me the word ; and we must then get the jib on the ship and put her head round. There is a fine breeze blowing, and if we can only get outside the heads without being overtaken, I have no fears whatever.”

So saying, Ned ran aft and placed himself at the wheel, which he manipulated in such a way as to keep the ship head to the wind with her bows pointing toward the shore, thus keeping up the appearance that she was still riding to her anchor. Price meanwhile posted himself on the forecastle, and kept the telescope leveled at the shore.

For some time all went well. The ship, under the influence of the fresh breeze, which affected her with increasing power as she lengthened her distance from the land, drove steadily astern, and still no warning word came from Price.

At length, however, when she had drifted about a mile, and had arrived within about a mile and three quarters of the contracted channel between the north and south bluffs which divided the inner from the outer basin, the steward cried out :

"They are after us, Mr. Wilson ; I can see the flash of oars in the moon-light !"

"All right !" answered Ned, sending the wheel hard over with a spin, and leaving it to rush forward. "Now, Price, aft with the starboard jib sheets, and belay them—not too flat, man ; let them flow a bit—so, that's well ! Now tail on here to the halyards with me, and let us set the sail. Up with it ! that's your sort ! Now take it under the belaying pin and let me browse it up. Yo-ho ; ho-hip ; ho-ho ! Belay that ! Now, the main topmast stay-sail. Let go the down-haul ; that is it, that rope you have your hand on—cast it off ! That's right. Here are the sheets ; hook the clips into the ring bolt there close to the second gun. That is all right. Now take a turn with the running part round that cleat ! Capital ! Now wait a moment."

The ship was by this time broadside on to the wind, and gathering headway under the powerful influence of the jib, necessitating a hand at the wheel. Ned therefore ran aft, and, summoning the astonished Sibyl from her cabin, where she was making preparations for passing another night on board, he sent her to the wheel, with instructions how to act, but concealing from her for the present the fact that they were pursued.

With the aid of the winch the two men succeeded in getting the main topmast staysail set, after which they hauled out the spanker. They were now running for the passage between the two bluffs, with the wind over their starboard quarter, the ship in her best possible sailing trim, and going through the water at a speed of nearly three knots.

This, however, was not fast enough to suit Ned, for, though they had secured a capital start, and he conjectured that the pursuers were too thoroughly intoxicated to be capable of pulling a boat at any very great speed, he knew that at the southwestern extremity of the outer basin they would reach the most difficult part of their navigation.

This consisted of a channel only half a mile in width by about a mile and a quarter in length, bending to the southeast, where the ship would be almost completely becalmed under the high land. And it was here, if anywhere, that he expected to be overtaken.

So, without wasting time in ascertaining the whereabouts of the pursuing boat, he hurried aloft and cast off the lashing from the main topgallant stay-sail, and, sending the sheets down on deck, descended and helped Price to set the sail.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—THE PURSUIT.

NED now had as much canvas upon the Flying Cloud as he believed he and the steward could conveniently manage for the present. He was, therefore, compelled to content himself with making a tour of the decks and so trimming the sheets that the different sails set should draw to the utmost advantage.

Then, and not until then, did he allow himself leisure to take a peep through the glass at what was going on astern. The sight which met his eyes was by no means reassuring, for he now saw that there were no less than *three* boats in pursuit, the foremost of which—one of the gigs—was distinctly gaining upon him.

"If they have no firearms with them," said Ned to Price, "I think we may perhaps be able to keep them from boarding, even in the event of their overtaking us; and, in any case, I think it will be advisable to have up on deck and load a few of those rifles from the arm chest, for having gone so far it will never do now for us to allow ourselves to be taken. Get the keys of the arm chest and magazine, Joe, and bring up a couple of dozen rifles and a few packets of cartridges."

The rifles were brought on deck and loaded carefully, half of them being stacked in the waist of the ship, whilst the other half, with a liberal supply of ammunition, were taken up on the after house.

By the time that this was done the ship had reached the passage between the bluffs, and as soon as she was fairly through Ned kept away dead before the wind for the mouth of the "Narrows," as the contracted entrance channel was called.

The ship being under fore and aft canvas only, this alteration in her course was a disadvantage rather than otherwise, the staysails refusing to stand properly; moreover, the high land was now once more close aboard of them on both quarters, rendering the wind light and shifty, in consequence of which the ship lost way perceptibly.

The ship was fully half way across the outer basin when the gig—the leading boat—opened fire upon her. The weapon fired was evidently a rifle, for though the boat was half a mile astern, Ned distinctly heard the whistle of the bullet overhead, showing not only that they were well within the range of the piece, but also that it had been skilfully and steadily aimed, a circumstance which led him to conjecture that Williams, probably the only perfectly sober man in the entire crew, must be in charge of the boat.

The ship being thus proved to be within range, Ned now took the wheel himself, sending Sibyl below to the saloon, with instructions not to venture from thence out on deck until he should intimate to her that she could do so with safety.

The sheets now had to be trimmed over, but the ship being found to steer herself, this was not a matter of very great difficulty, Ned leaving the helm to itself for the short time necessary to enable him and Price to perform the operation. When he returned to his post he was greatly concerned to discover that the gig was less than a quarter of a mile astern, and coming up rapidly, though, from the unsteady way in which the oars were being handled, it was evident that the crew were pretty nearly exhausted with their long pull.

The fugitives were now fairly within the Narrows, and in their narrowest part, moreover; the shore being within a quarter of a mile of them on either hand. This of itself would have been a matter of no consequence, however, had the configuration of the land been different; but, unfortunately, the

cliffs towered high above the mastheads on both sides of the ship, and as the wind happened to be blowing athwart the channel the canvas was almost becalmed; indeed, had it not been for the little draft of air which now and then came down the channel astern of her, the Flying Cloud would have lost headway altogether.

As it was, she still moved through the water, though at a speed barely sufficient to give her steerage way; and the crew of the gig, seeing her almost helpless condition, raised a loud, confused shout, which they doubtless meant for a cheer, and redoubled their efforts at the oars.

They saw the pirate raise his rifle and take a long steady aim, then came the flash.

The bullet struck the taffrail just at their feet. Williams dashed the piece down savagely, disappointed at his ill success; and Ned stepped to the wheel and gave it a slight adjusting touch.

When he turned again Williams was standing up in the boat, with his hands to his mouth, and next moment came the hail:

"Cloud ahoy! If you will heave to at once I solemnly swear that no harm will come to either of you. I will pass over and forgive your mad attempt to run away with the ship; but if you compel us to pull alongside and recapture her, look out! Your punishment will be such that I will make you positively *pray* to be put out of your misery. Do you hear me?"

"I can see his eyes, now," said Ned. "I will fire first, and directly the smoke clears away you must follow suit; take care to fire into the thick of the crew so as to do all the mischief possible. Now!"

As Ned spoke he leveled his piece, and aiming carefully, pulled the trigger.

Simultaneously with the report came a sharp yell of agony and a groan, and as the smoke drifted away two oars were seen to drop overboard, and two forms to sink down into the bottom of the boat.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—THE FLYING CLOUD'S ESCAPE.

NED WILSON's successful shot caused some confusion in the pirate's boat, which was increased when Price, the steward, fired his rifle, and Williams was seen to spring convulsively from his seat and fall forward. The pursuit was now suspended for a time, and Ned went back to the Flying Cloud's helm.

By this time the ship, having drifted past the highest point of land to windward, once more began to feel the breeze; and when the gig—having lost a good hundred yards' distance—again resumed the chase the ship was creeping ahead at a speed of fully three knots, with the wind coming truer and fresher at every fathom of progress.

The men in the gig pulled furiously, but ten minutes later the Flying Cloud glided past the last point of land and was rising and falling on the open ocean.

As soon as the ship was fairly clear of the harbor Ned kept her away on a southwest course for the island on which the skipper and Manners had been landed; and such excellent progress did they make that on the day but one

following that of their escape from Island Harbor they had the satisfaction of heaving to the ship off the skipper's island. Here the colors were hoisted and a gun was fired at frequent intervals, a keen scrutiny of the island being maintained meanwhile with the aid of the telescope, so that if the captain and Manners were still there they might have an opportunity afforded them to paddle off to the ship, or at least to signal their presence.

Hour after hour passed away, however, without any sign being discovered of the existence of living beings upon the island; and at length, just as the sun was setting, Ned headed the ship about and laid his course for Refuge Island, shrewdly surmising that the skipper and Manners had found means to rejoin the passengers.

The mountain on Refuge Island was made out about three o'clock next morning, from the deck of the Flying Cloud, the atmosphere being somewhat hazy at the time; and daybreak found the ship off the northeastern extremity of the island, some two miles distant, when the colors were again hoisted and guns fired as before, the reports serving, as has already been seen, to greatly disconcert the Malays and expedite their departure.

The first thing seen by the anxious watchers on the ship's deck was the proa crowding sail out of the harbor, a sight which filled them with the keenest anxiety; and Ned, thinking it possible that his friends might at that moment be prisoners on board the vessel, was busying himself in making preparations to open fire upon her, with the hope that he might be able to dismast her and so frustrate her attempt to escape, when his mind was set at rest by the sight of the punt pulling off with Manners and Nicholls in her.

Running down toward the tiny craft, Ned and his companions soon had the satisfaction of shaking hands with their two former shipmates, after which came mutual hurried inquiries and explanations, in which, on the part of the islanders, the adventures of the past night naturally occupied an important place.

For the mouth of the harbor the Flying Cloud was now headed, under Manners' pilotage, and half an hour later she rounded to and let go her anchor in mid stream exactly opposite the creek, to the unbounded astonishment and delight of Henderson and Grant.

The delight and exultation of all hands when at length a general meeting took place at the fort must be left to the lively imagination of the reader; an entire chapter would be needed for its adequate portrayal. Suffice it to say that there was only one bitter drop in the cup of happiness quaffed by the party that morning, and that was the sad loss of poor Captain Blake, which Ned felt with exceptional keenness, not only because it was wholly unexpected by him, but also because he had, ever since making good his escape, been looking forward with pleasurable anticipation to the moment when he should be able to hand over the ship to her rightful commander.

CHAPTER XL.—THE LAUNCH OF THE PETREL.

THE whole of that day was spent by the party in the interchange of a full and detailed recital of the various events which had transpired since the

moment of their separation ; and when it came to Ned's turn he was, as may be supposed, especially eloquent upon the subject of the treasure which he had discovered.

His description of the contents of the cave, together with the exhibition of the pearls and precious stones already secured, made a profound impression upon his hearers, who fully agreed with him that such vast possibilities of wealth were not to be lightly abandoned.

How to secure it was, however, the question—a question which Ned solved the moment he set eyes upon the Petrel. He proposed that she should at once be completed and launched, and that, whilst the rest of the party should effect a leisurely removal of themselves and whatever they wished to take with them on board the Flying Cloud, he, with Manners, should proceed in the cutter to Josh Williams' island, and, watching their opportunity, run in during the night, secure the treasure, and leave again next morning—as they could easily manage to do—before the pirates could gain an idea of their being at hand.

It was a risky thing to attempt, certainly, though not nearly so risky as it at first sight appears ; and after a full and exhaustive discussion of the chances for and against success the bold scheme was agreed to.

Accordingly, on the following morning all hands went to work with a will ; and they labored to such good purpose that the last finishing touches were put to the little craft on the Friday following, leaving nothing to be done on the Saturday but the actual launching, and such trimming of the ballast as might be found necessary when she was afloat.

The launch was effected successfully, the ceremony of christening being performed by little Lucille ; and, it being found when the craft was afloat that only a very trifling alteration was necessary in the distribution of the ballast, the alteration was at once made, after which all hands repaired on board, sail was made, and they went outside to try the cutter's paces. The result was more than satisfactory—it was a delightful surprise ; for not only in her seagoing powers, but also in the qualities of speed and weatherliness did the Petrel far exceed the most sanguine anticipations of everybody, including her designer. They worked to windward for about three hours and then returned to the harbor, where the remainder of the day was spent in getting on board the provisions, water, and other necessities for the projected trip.

On the following Monday the Petrel sailed for Island Harbor, with Ned as skipper, and Manners as mate, cook, steward, and crew, all rolled into one—the adventurers receiving all sorts of cautions and good wishes as they said good by at the cove.

The course to be steered was northeast, or nearly dead to windward as the wind stood at that season, and the distance was about three hundred miles ; so it was calculated that the trip there and back would occupy about a week. But no sooner were they fairly outside the harbor's mouth than Ned and Manners exchanged the opinion that a smart little weatherly fore and aft rigged craft like the Petrel ought to do the distance in considerably less than the time specified ; and they forthwith took measures to practically demon-

strate the soundness of that opinion, "carrying on" sail to such a daring extent that even Captain Blake would have remonstrated had he been with them.

The craft, however, was stanch, the spars and rigging sound, the canvas new; and the youthful mariners, though daring, were by no means reckless. The weather also was settled and the wind steady, if somewhat fresh. All, therefore, went well with them, and so thoroughly did the cutter answer the expectations of her crew, that at dawn on the Wednesday morning—the second day out—the high land of Island Harbor was distinctly visible from the deck, showing just above the horizon like a sharply defined purplish gray blot upon the sky to windward.

At the same time the adventurers also made out something else, to wit, a fleet of five sail of small craft dead to windward—in fact, immediately between the cutter and the island.

At first they were considerably puzzled to determine the character of these small craft, which were steering due west; but at length, as they closed and became more distinctly visible, Ned was enabled to solve the riddle. The fleet was none other than *the boats belonging to the Flying Cloud!*

CHAPTER XLI.—HOMEWARD BOUND.

NED conjectured that the hasty abandonment of Island Harbor, indicated by the appearance of the boats at sea, arose either from a fear that Ned might give such information of the existence of the place as would lead to the speedy capture of its occupants, or a determination on the part of the discomfited pirates to seek at sea a substitute for the noble ship of which they had been so cleverly deprived.

Whichever—if either—of these surmises might have been the correct one, a very lively interest in the movements of the *Petrel* was speedily manifested by the occupants of the boats, makeshift signals of distress being promptly displayed on each craft. Ned paid attention to these to the extent of closing with the fleet sufficiently to enable him to establish their identity beyond question, after which he calmly made arrangements to avoid them.

When this was seen, the boats hauled up in pursuit, but they might as well have attempted to pursue the sea birds which hovered in their wake. Ned so maneuvered as to pass the nearest boat well out of rifle shot, at the same time steering such a course as would be unlikely to excite any suspicion that he was bound to Island Harbor; and though the pursuit was maintained for nearly an hour, its hopelessness had by that time become so apparent that the boats again bore up and were soon afterward lost to view in the western board.

For the information of those interested in the ultimate fate of the pirates, it may be as well to mention here that they were from that time never more seen or heard of.

It was just noon that day when the *Petrel* entered the Narrows; and all fear of discovery by the pirates being now at an end, Ned took her directly

alongside the cliff, immediately underneath the entrance to the treasure cave, and began the shipment of the treasure.

This was an easy and expeditious task, the jars of gold dust and the gold bricks being simply slung at the end of a line and lowered down the cliff to Manners, who received them below. The casket with the remainder of the gems was not forgotten; and a bale of embroidered stuffs, which Sibyl had declared to be of priceless value, was also taken, as were such of the shields and weapons as would bear handling—Grant and Henderson having expressed a very particular wish to possess some of these, as quite unique curiosities. But the ivory and the other bulky articles were left for the benefit of whomsoever might choose to go after them.

The shipment was completed in about three hours, after which Ned entered the inner basin and worked up as far as the anchorage, which spot was indicated by the buoy still watching over the slipped anchor.

Though nobody was to be seen, and the storehouses had all the appearance of being completely abandoned, the voyagers were far too prudent to land—for which, indeed, there was no inducement—and, having satisfied their curiosity, they wore round and proceeded at once to sea, passing out through the Narrows again just as the sun was setting.

Thirty six hours later, or about six o'clock on the following Friday morning, they once more entered Grant's harbor and let go their anchor, to the accompaniment of a surprised and delighted shout of welcome from Nicholls, who—the entire party having removed on board the *Flying Cloud*—happened to be keeping the anchor watch at the time.

But little more remains to be told. The whole party made sail in the *Flying Cloud* for Batavia, in Java, the nearest port, which was reached after a short but toilsome passage. Here they were fortunate enough to pick up the shipwrecked crew of a New York ship, who were only too glad to ship for the passage home, especially as Ned felt justified in offering them the top scale of wages; and the owners of the *Cloud* having been telegraphed to and letters written by all hands, advising their friends of their safety, sail was once more made, this time for New York direct. On the voyage home the *Flying Cloud* fully justified the name which had been bestowed upon her; for, carrying on night and day, Ned succeeded in making the fastest passage on record from Anjer to Sandy Hook. The latter was sighted one fine evening in April nearly two years after the ship had last passed it.

Gayly the good ship had stemmed the tide as she plowed her stately way up the harbor in the wake of a tug next morning; and a right noble and beautiful sight did she present, in all the glory of fresh paint and newly blacked rigging—laid on during the spell of fine weather experienced just before reaching Sandy Hook—with her white canvas snugly stowed, yards laid accurately square, running rigging hauled taut and neatly coiled down, and flag at each mast.

Many were the admiring glances bestowed upon her from the craft which were passing, either going up or down the harbor—for, being only in deep ballast trim, she towed light, and passed ahead of nearly all the inward bound craft—and at length a great bluff bowed, deep laden bark was overtaken, the

quarter deck occupants of which appeared to manifest not only admiration, but quite a surprising amount of curiosity as the two vessels closed.

At length, as the Flying Cloud ranged up on the port quarter of the bark, an excited figure appeared to suddenly go demented altogether, for, rushing to the bark's gangway, he threw himself over rather than descended the vessel's side into a boat which was towing alongside, and with imperious gestures seemed to command the boatmen to convey him to the approaching ship.

They obeyed, and the distance between the two vessels being but short, in less than a minute a voice—well known, notwithstanding its excited, exultant ring—hailed :

" Flying Cloud ahoy ! heave us a rope's end, will ye, and let your captain come on board ? "

With a delighted shout the *old* hands rushed to the gangway, Ned foremost ; the rope's end was thrown, the boat sheered alongside, and in another moment Captain Blake, alive, well, and as hearty as ever, stood once more on his own quarter deck, shaking hands convulsively with everybody who came near him, with the unheeded tears chasing each other down his cheeks as he huskily replied to the enthusiastic greetings of those who had long ago given him up for lost.

His story was a long one, but it may be condensed into a few words. The raft, contrary to all expectation, had held together and lived through the terrific hurricane, before which it was driven furiously to the southward, to be wrecked eventually upon a small islet, whence, after many months of hardship and privation, the skipper had been rescued by a sandal wood trader and conveyed to Singapore.

He there joined the bark, homeward bound, the hospitable skipper gladly offering him a passage, and, by a singular coincidence, had arrived in New York harbor only an hour or two ahead of his own ship.

The arrival home of the vessel so long overdue, and the publication of the adventures of those who went out and came home again in her, created a profound sensation almost throughout the length and breadth of America ; but it was soon obliterated by the occurrence of events of greater importance to the community at large, and the chief personages of the story were allowed to sink back into a welcome obscurity, although the public interest in the subject was fitfully revived from time to time by accounts of proceedings in connection with the restoration, as far as possible, to its rightful owners of the booty brought home in the Flying Cloud's hold.

Like most seamen, Ned was generosity itself, and had he been allowed to have his way, the treasure found at Island Harbor would have been equally divided among all those who had participated with him in that adventurous voyage ; but to such a proposal, of course, not one of the interested parties would listen. Nicholls and Price, however, eventually consented to accept a moderate pension, and the doctor and the engineer point proudly to their trophies of ancient arms as they tell the story connected with them to their friends.

Captain Blake still commands the Flying Cloud, ship and captain alike being the most popular in the trade ; and Bob Manners was, at latest accounts,

superintending, on full pay, the building and equipment of a magnificent yacht, in which Mrs. Wilson, formerly known as Sibyl Stanley, hopes to accompany her husband on a luxurious trip round the world.

Harry Collingwood.

THE END.

OVER THE DANGER LINE.

A thrilling experience on a fishing trip—Face to face with eternity on the brink of Niagara's precipice—The mistaken impression that brought two men to the verge of death.

IT was midsummer, and a college classmate and I were camping on one of the little islands that dot the upper Niagara River. The next year's prizes in Latin and mathematics had constrained each of us to include in our outfit books that could not be termed light, and we devoted a part of each day to earnest study. Nevertheless, we found plenty of time for sport. We soon became familiar with all the usual "best spots for fishing." These places, although not exhausted, had by degrees lost their charm. We longed for a change, for novelty. And our desire was unexpectedly fulfilled.

We had rowed down toward the head of Goat Island, and were foolishly permitting ourselves to experience the thrilling sensation of approaching the danger line, the uncertain boundary between safety and the possibility of being drawn into the rapids that begin nearly a mile above the great precipice. My friend was rowing, and I was idly trolling, but with no thought of sport. Suddenly I felt a fierce tug at my line. Nothing but a black bass, and a large one, could show such vim, and so it proved. After an exciting battle, a beauty was landed in the boat.

The next day, and for several succeeding days, we returned to this place, and gradually became familiar with its characteristics. The favorite place for the fish seemed to be well down toward the head of Goat Island, where the water divides, part to go over the American Falls, and part to go over the Horse Shoe. I hardly think that the selection of this place necessarily indicated an intelligent design on the part of the fish, but it is certain that, in this spot, they will ever experience the greatest possible immunity from fishermen. The place was much farther down than we dared to venture.

To overcome this difficulty we added to the length of our line, more and more, till we arrived at the measurement which appeared to give the best result. We also gained in experience as to just how far it was safe to go with our boat. We would let ourselves drift down stream till by pulling an easy, steady stroke, the effect of the current would be neutralized. While one rowed, the other would slowly let out the line. It seldom happened that this would be exhausted before a capture was effected.

It was the close of our summer vacation, when late one afternoon, we sought the usual location for a farewell bit of sport. Our luck had been even better than usual. My friend was rowing, and I had let out the line, by mutual agreement, for the last time.

It had gone nearly to its full length when I felt a sudden jerk, then a steady pull. "This is the pick of the tribe," I called to my companion over my shoulder. The victim was making a glorious struggle. We both became excited. The strain on the line would relax for a moment, only to be increased till I feared it would part. I began to pull in, slowly at first, and then more rapidly as our game seemed to become exhausted. My friend and I meanwhile kept up a running fire of comment. I expected every moment to catch a glimpse of a shining, struggling body.

The line was nearly in, and the strain had diminished to almost nothing. I looked into the water beneath. The line seemed almost perpendicular, then the boat passed over it. I was startled, and looked around. The hook had been caught in a snag or fissure of the rock, and all the time I had been pulling in I had, in reality, been slowly but surely pulling the boat toward the awful precipice whose mighty roar seemed to sound our doom.

For a moment I was paralyzed. I tried to speak. I could not force a sound from my lips. At last, after what seemed to my excited senses an age, my voice came with a rush, and with a sound so hoarse that it seemed to mingle and be lost with that of the cataract. "Row, row, row!" I cried.

Before my voice could have reached him, my companion had comprehended the situation, and was bending to the oars. Then began a desperate struggle for life. I could do nothing but sit with bated breath, and watch his frantic efforts. Every moment was precious, and the idea of my taking one of the oars was not to be considered.

My friend was rowing with such a quick, powerful stroke that hope gradually came to me. With each pull the boat would seemingly rise to meet the oncoming water, and then subside. I looked toward the shore. What could cause that peculiar seesaw of the trees? I shuddered as I realized the explanation. Between the strokes the boat was carried down by the current apparently as much as it was forced up stream by the efforts of the rower.

Difficult as the task was, I forced myself to speak words of encouragement. In one breath I assured him that we were gaining at every stroke, and then, lest he should relax his exertions, I pictured the horror of the death that awaited us. At first no advance could be distinguished, but, after rowing for a very long time, as it seemed to me, I detected undeniable evidence that we were gaining. Clear space could be seen between a tree and chimney that, in the beginning, had been outlined together against the sky. So much time, and only a gain of ten or fifteen feet! Would my friend ever bear up under this fearful ordeal?

I looked at him more attentively. Great beads of perspiration coursed rapidly down his face. Every muscle seemed strained to the limit. His face had assumed a tense expression, with eyes dilated and tongue protruding from between his teeth. Yet invincible pluck was written in every feature.

Any one who, in a moment of danger, has been denied the power of action, will appreciate the tax put upon my self control. There is a sense of satisfaction, at a time like this, in being able to make an heroic struggle; to fight against the inevitable; to exhaust one's vital energy; to die hard. This forced repose, while the sullen roar of the precipice sounded a dreadful menace

in my ears ; this fear to even breathe, lest the balance of the boat might be affected ; this dearth of motion, where all around, foaming, gliding water, the drifting spray, the dancing trees, the oscillating shores, the flying clouds, were instinct with motion—this was the most dreadful strain I was ever called upon to endure.

I think all might have been well had I been able to control myself for a few moments longer, but driven to frenzy with the consciousness of my own helplessness, I urged my companion to still greater exertion. A moment of increased effort, the sound of a splintering car, the cry of horror from my companion, the sensation of suspended motion, of the boat being whirled round in the powerful grasp of the current like a top, the ominous impelling force pushing us on with ever increasing speed—those were incidents that followed each other with a rapidity that dazed all our faculties.

Our eyes met, and the same story must have been written there, for we both involuntarily spoke the one word that expressed all : "Lost !"

In spite of the hurry of events, and the confusion to our senses, the scene of that summer evening is so indelibly fixed upon my memory that nothing but death can efface it. After years the picture often comes to me in all its appalling splendor, and I feel myself drifting down, down toward the awful precipice.

My friend had retained his grasp of the remaining oar, and it was probably this that gave to our boat a sort of revolving motion. One moment we would be whirled round till dizzy, then swept forward, and over some sharp decline where the spray would envelop us like a cloud, and cause us to gasp for breath. Again, we would veer to one side of a huge boulder that reared itself in midstream, impregnable against the assaults of the raging torrent. Tossed here and there on the foam capped waves, each of which hid an outcropping rock, it was little short of miraculous that our boat was not dashed to pieces.

We had but a vague notion of our location. Indeed, it mattered little to us, since the end was one—an appalling plunge to death.

Suddenly we felt the forward end of the boat caught by some obstruction. Almost instantly it swung around as on a pivot, with a violence that is indescribable. It released itself, was afloat for a moment, then struck broadside against an obstruction further on. This time the boat held fast. Our momentum had been so great that we were nearly stunned by the shock.

We almost instantly recovered ourselves, and the incidents that contributed to our deliverance dawned upon us. We were stranded upon the upper end of Luna Island, which, with Goat Island, is at the very brink of the precipice. Our boat had first caught on some projection from a little nameless island, only a few feet in diameter, and about fifty feet up stream from Luna.

Almost any day, the visitor on Luna Island may see stranded logs and drift lying on the very spot where our boat was landed ; so one may see in our deliverance neither the impossible nor miraculous. But who will say that, behind all the innumerable forces that bore our boat onward to apparent doom, there was not a Directing Hand ?

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Do not use any letter more times than it appears in the word. Use no language except English. Words spelled alike, but with different meaning, can be used but once. Use any dictionary. Pronouns, nouns, verbs, adverbs, prefixes, suffixes, adjectives, proper nouns allowed. Anything that is a legitimate word will be allowed. Work it out in this manner: E., Eat, Eats, Nat, Nut, Nuts, Net, Nets, Tat, Sat, Set, Hat, Hats, etc. Use these words in your list.

The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD AND JENNETH MILLER MONTHLY will give the following presents absolutely free to those making the largest lists:

1,000 Prizes:

1 Beautiful Rose Wood Upright Wing Piano	\$700.00
1 Set Century Dictionary, 10 Vols., Half Morocco	130.00
1 Worcester Bicycle, High Grade, '97 Model, Ladies' or Gentlemen's	125.00
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100 Cash Prizes—\$5 each	500.00
100 " " \$4 " "	400.00
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100 Dress Patterns, Organdies, 12 yds. each, \$5 per pattern.	500.00
300 Dress Patterns, Grenadines, 12 yds. each, \$5 per pattern.	1,500.00
167 Kombi Cameras, value \$3 each	501.00
125 Cash prizes of \$2 each	250.00

1,000 Prizes.

Value, \$5,242.50

Why we give the rewards.—It is done to attract attention to WOMAN'S WORLD AND JENNETH MILLER MONTHLY, a beautiful, practical magazine for women and the home; edited by Mrs. B. A. Whitney, assisted by Duane Sturgis, Sally Van Rensselaer, Helen Whitney Clark, and others; 36 pages; profusely illustrated with original material by the ablest artists and writers in literature; three great serial stories always running. Yearly subscription price, \$1.00.

MEN OF NATIONAL REPUTATION WILL AWARD THE PRIZES

The reputation of men of sterling integrity and one of the oldest and best ladies' publications in the country is staked on the honesty of this proposition. The men who will decide who win the prizes are known to everybody throughout the world, whose ability, worth, and integrity are unquestioned. The Board of Award is Rev. Joseph Sandersen, D. D., author, scholar

and divine; Horatio Alger, Jr., an author whose name needs no comment, and John Halberton, equally celebrated. Every person who enters into the contest for one of the prizes can rest assured that they will get just and impartial treatment.

Every prize in the above schedule is standard value and is now in our office and paid for, ready for delivery as soon as the judges decide the winners.

HOW TO GET A PRIZE

The person sending us the largest list of words spelled from the letters in Enthusiastic will be awarded the Beautiful Upright Wing Piano, valued at \$700.00. The person sending the second largest list, 1 set of Century Dictionary, 10 vols., with handsome Oak Stand. The third largest list, 1 Worcester Bicycle; the fourth, 1 Monarch Bicycle; the fifth, 1 White Bicycle; the sixth, 1 Racycle; the seventh, 1 set Standard Dictionary (2 vols.); the eighth, 1 Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, latest edition. The next 100 largest lists, \$5.00 each, and the next 100 largest lists, \$4.00 each, and the next 100 largest lists, \$3.00 each; the next 100 largest lists, a 12-yard Organdie Dress Pattern, worth \$5.00 each; the next 300 largest lists, a 12-yard Grenadine Dress Pattern, worth \$5.00 each; the next 167, each one Kombi Camera, \$3.00 each; the next 125 largest lists, \$2.00 each.

These prizes will be given free and without consideration. To compete for a prize you must send 25 cents in silver or stamps, and for that 25 cents we will send WOMAN'S WORLD AND JENNETH MILLER MONTHLY three months. It is a most fascinating study to make up the list of words and a source of pride to have won in a contest of this kind. This contest will close July 10. No one will be allowed to compete for a prize unless they have paid 25 cents for a three months subscription. There are 1,000 prizes. They will be fairly and honestly awarded by the judges above named. These prizes are all exactly as represented and have an actual value of over five thousand dollars, and every prize **WILL BE GIVEN AWAY**. The names of the winners—and your name can be one of them if you try—will appear in the next number of our great paper after the awards are made. **THERE WILL BE 1,000 WHO WILL WIN.** Isn't it worth your while to try for the Piano or one of the Wheels, or the splendid Dictionary, or one of the premiums. In subscribing for our paper you know that you will get fair and honorable treatment. Send 25 cents to-day for a **THREE** months' subscription. An opportunity like this will not occur again. Do not miss it. Remit in stamps or silver, money order or registered letter. Address

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N. B.—If you prefer full rules and regulations send 25 cents **NOW** for three months' subscription, and we will send you full instructions and a coupon of Free Entry for your list when completed.

References—Any mercantile agency, any newspaper in the United States, or ask your New York friend to call and see us.

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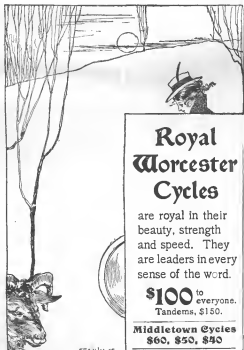


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How many words do you think you can make from the letters in the word "FACETIOUS"? Use each letter as desired, but not more times than it appears in "Facetious." Verbs, pronouns, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, plurals allowed. Words spelled alike, but having different meanings, count as one word. Use any standard dictionary. All legitimate English words count. Proper nouns, prefixes, suffixes, obsolete and foreign words do not count. Work it out as follows: Face, fat, it, sot, set, sat, out, etc.

Our Offer.—We will pay \$100 for the largest list, \$50 for the second largest, \$25 for the third, \$10 each for the next five, \$5 each for the next ten, \$1 each for the next twenty-five. To the next two hundred we will give \$1 each in the form of a year's subscription to MODES. That is to say, we will divide among two hundred and forty-three contestants the aggregate sum of \$500, according to merit. Don't you think you could be one of the two hundred and forty-three? TRY IT!

Our Purpose.—The above rewards for mental effort are given free and without consideration for the purpose of attracting attention to MODES, by May Maston, the most popular up-to-date Fashion Magazine in the world. Its 26 pages, replete with beautiful illustrations of the latest styles in ladies', misses' and children's costumes, make it a most necessary in every household. The Design and Fashion Illustrations by May Maston, render it invaluable as an absolutely reliable Fashion Guide.

Our Conditions.—You must send with your list of words, in one full-paid prepaid package, 25 cents (stamp or silver) for a THREE MONTHS' TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION to MODES.

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Our Aim.—The present monthly circulation of MODES exceeds 150,000. We strive to make it 200,000.

This contest will close Aug. 15th next so the names of successful spellers may be published in Oct. issue of MODES, mailed Sept. 15th, but SEND IN YOUR LIST AT ONCE. For our responsibility we refer you to any Mercantile Agency. Address: MODES FASHION MAGAZINE, DEPT. 780, 130 WHITE STREET, NEW YORK.

“A PROFESSOR OF BOOKS”—EMERSON.

In glancing through one of the early volumes of Charles Dudley Warner's "Library of the World's Best Literature," we met, in the Emerson section, an extract from one of the sage's fine pages that ran in this wise:

"Meantime the colleges, whilst they provide us with libraries, furnish no professor of books; and, I think, no chair is so much wanted."

It is doubtful if any phrase could so happily describe at once the function and the achievement of Mr. Warner in his new and great work. He himself is essentially a "professor of books," although the charm of his work has tended to make us forget his wide and varied learning. And knowing not only books but living writers and critics as well, Mr. Warner has gathered around him as advisers and aids other "professors of books," not men of the Dryasdust school, but those who possess the same salient charm and graphic power as himself.

The result of this remarkable literary movement has been to provide the great reading public, the busy public of ever scant leisure, with just what Emerson declared more than half a century ago we so much needed, namely, a guide to the best reading.

Emerson indeed likens a library of miscellaneous books to a lottery wherein there are a hundred blanks to one prize, and finally exclaims that "some charitable soul, after losing a great deal of time among the false books and alighting upon a few true ones, which made him happy and wise, would do a right act in naming those which have been bridges or ships to carry him safely over dark morasses and barren oceans into the heart of sacred cities, into palaces and temples."

This is precisely what Mr. Warner's new library does in the fine, critical articles which preface the master-works of the greatest writers.

Exactly as the professor of chemistry or physics or astronomy or biology gives the student a view of the whole field of his science, the summary of its achievements, its great names and its great works, so Mr. Warner and his associates have given us the

distillation not merely of the whole world's literature, in itself a colossal attempt, but, in addition, its history, biography, and criticism as well. It is only when we grasp its full import that we realize the truly vast and monumental character of the Library. It must assuredly rank as one of the most notable achievements of the century.

In our last issue we called the attention of readers to the fact that there is a wide-spread desire on the part of people from all sections of this great country to secure one of the early sets of Mr. Warner's Library.

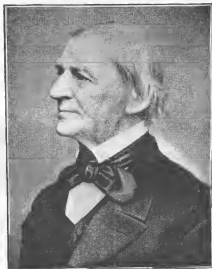
In so important and costly a work as the Library, the first edition is indisputably the most valuable on account of being printed from

the new, fresh plates, thus causing both type and engravings to stand out with unusual clearness and beauty, and as it is the custom the world over for publishers to charge a much higher price for the first edition than is demanded for those that are issued later, one would naturally suppose that the early volumes of Mr. Warner's Library would have been sold for a high price, but the publishers of the work have actually so reduced the price of this most valuable and desirable of all editions, so that just now it is obtainable for about one-half the regular subscription price, and the additional privilege of easy monthly

payments is also granted for the purpose of quickly placing a few sets in each community for inspection.

Believing many of our readers desire to obtain this superior first edition, we have reserved 50 sets of the few that now remain, but care should be taken in writing for full particulars to The Harper's Weekly Club, 91 Fifth Avenue, New York, to mention THE ARGOSY, so that there will be no misunderstanding.

The publishers inform us that our reservation in connection with those made by the other leading magazines, fully exhausts the entire first edition of this valuable Library and no more can possibly be obtained. This is positively the last reservation we shall be able to make from the first (and most perfect) edition of this great Library.



RALPH WALDO EMERSON.